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June 2013
DHS15 | QR15

GoodFood

MIDDLE EAST

Sunshine desserts

Orange & pomegranate
cheesecake p57

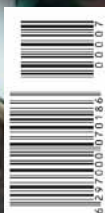
Travel Special

- Gourmet getaways
- Asian hotspots
- London for epicures

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Eastern-inspired drinks

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Welcome!



I love the sense of anticipation in the air, this time of the year. Holiday season is round the corner, and all around me, people are talking about their travel plans for the summer, looking into deals and booking flights. An overwhelming trend I've noticed of late is how important a part of the travel experience food is becoming – it's no longer about the best priced, all-inclusive packages, more and more people are

heading out to explore new destinations with food firmly on their mind. On our facebook poll last month, 60 per cent of the respondents said trying out authentic cuisine was a top priority when travelling. And why not? As TV chef and consummate traveller Bobby Chinn said to me in his interview (*Chinn up!*, p64), "Food is the fast-track to truly understanding the history and culture of a people."

So, for those of you who, like me, think travel and food are inextricably linked together, we have a real treat in store. In our *Travel Special* this month, we feature a round-up of some spectacular luxury destinations for foodies around the world (*5 great gastro getaways*, p74), give you the inside track on London's culinary gems (*Lap up London*, p78), travel to Kenya for a gourmet adventure (*Safari luxe*, p83), and discover the best of Singapore and Tokyo in *Far East movement*, p84.

Much as we'd all like to hole up in say, a Swiss mountain chalet or somewhere like that, to escape for the next few months, we will inevitably have to get our heads around the desert summer. To help, we share the recipes for some delicious drinks all made of traditional regional ingredients that are cooling (*Liquid diet*, p36), feature a light, fresh salad series – we will continue with more summer salad recipes in July and August – in *Satisfying salads*, p38, and look at creative vegetarian recipes that are perfect when it's hot outside (*Make veg the star*, p40).

Whether you're hopping on a plane next week, or your summer holiday is still no more than a glint in the eye, I hope our features help you plan your epicurean adventures at home and beyond.

Bon voyage!

Sudeshna

Editor's picks

◆ I found this book to be a very well-balanced and interesting read on Indian cuisine, p21



◆ I love the unique flavour of hibiscus, and am definitely keeping a bottle of this Middle Eastern drink in my fridge this summer, p36



◆ The food, matched by stunning surroundings, at tropical hideaway Kahanda Kanda in Sri Lanka is truly special, p74

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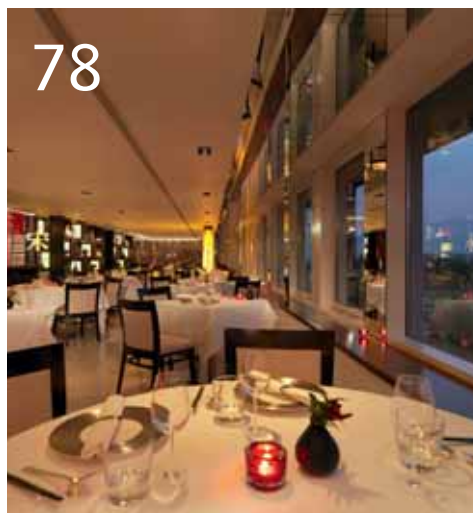
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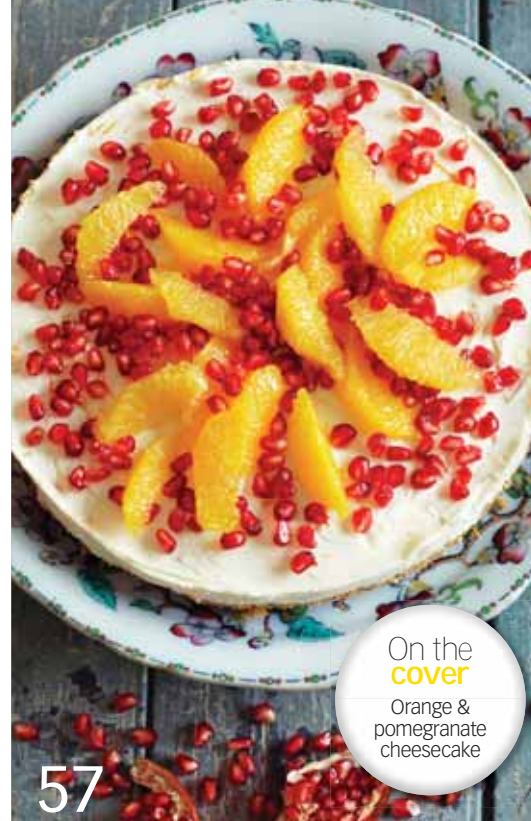
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94 Dining vouchers, plus discount books up for grabs.

WIN!

Our recipe descriptions

- V** Suitable for vegetarians
- F** You can freeze it
- NF** Not suitable for freezing
- Easy** Simple recipes even beginners can make
- A little effort** These require a bit more skill and confidence – such as making pastry
- More of a challenge** Recipes aimed at experienced cooks
- Low fat** 12g or less per portion
- Low cal** 500 calories or less per main.
- Superhealthy** Low in saturated fat, 5g or less per portion; low in salt, 1.5g or less; and at least one of the following: provides one-third or more of your daily requirement of fibre, iron, calcium, folic acid and/or vitamin C, or counts at least one portion of your recommended 5-a-day fruit and veg.
- Good for you** Low in saturated fat, low in salt.
- Heart healthy** Low in saturated fat, with 5g or less, and low in salt, with 1.5g or less, and high in omega-3 fatty acids
- 1 of 5-a-day** The number of portions of fruit and/or veg contained in a serving
- Vit C** **Iron** **Omega-3** **Calcium** **Folate** **Fibre**

Indicating recipes that are good sources of useful nutrients

Some recipes contain pork & alcohol. These are clearly marked and are for non-Muslims only. Look for these symbols:

- P** contains pork
- A** contains alcohol



74

Your say

We love to hear from you!

SIMPLY SUPER

I work 45 hours a week and for most days, my snacks vary from a chocolate bar and cookies, to muesli bars – not the healthiest option, but they do boost my mood! I found the super foods feature in the May issue (*10 superfoods everyone needs*, May 2013) very interesting, as I was reminded about nutritious foods that can easily be snacked on, in our busy schedules.

Cindy Law



A BETTER COOK

I don't mean to over-exaggerate, but you literally make life that bit easier don't you? Since moving to the Middle East, and without my mum's tips on how and what to cook, I was a bit lost.

To say I'm an average cook is fair, however, now that I visit the *BBC Good Food ME* website and refer to the magazine, I can truly say it has made a difference and my cooking has improved a lot. Instead of cooking the same stodgy, boring dishes, I now try more creative recipes and enjoy cooking much more. Plus, I don't feel lost when cooking. I made the tuna and rocket pizza recipe the other day (*Make it tonight*, May 2013), and even froze some for a later day, which was great as we are always hungry at home!

Lucinda Morrell



Win!

The writer of the Star Letter wins a **Dhs1,000 voucher from @home**, South Africa's leading homeware store. @home offers a glamorous and fashionable range of products for the entire home, including the bedroom, bathroom, kitchen, dining, and living room, as well as general home décor items, appliances and office accessories. Their contemporary, fresh, and innovative products are both practical and aesthetically designed. @home stores are located in Dubai at Mercato Mall, Ibn Battuta Mall, Dubai Marina Mall, The Dubai Mall and Mall of the Emirates; in Abu Dhabi at Al Wahda mall; and at Al Hamra Mall in Ras Al Khaimah.



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THE HOMEWARE STORE

Star Letter

GOING GREEN

It was good to see the green initiative taken by *BBC Good Food ME* in the Kitchen special feature (*Give your kitchen an eco makeover*, May 2013). While the information on cleaning materials given by the experts is truly helpful, what everyone needs to have is a little responsibility for the actions taken in the kitchen and around the house. The baby steps we take, can help a long way in protecting our health and the condition of our planet. For quite some time now, I have opted out of shopping bags while grocery shopping. When I

pick up single vegetables I make the salesperson put the price sticker on the item itself – that's one plastic bag less! And of course carrying your own re-usable shopping bag, or a natty handcrafted one, is eco-friendly and can be the envy of all! There are a myriad of things we can do, other than the three R's, but the most important is the intention to help ourselves and the world.

Sanjukta Sudev



FOREVER A FAN

I'm a subscriber to the magazine for over two years now, and like how each recipe is rated according to efficiency and gives you an indication of the preparation and cooking time as well. I especially like how it inspires amateur cooks to try out recipes as well. You really can't go wrong with *BBC Good Food ME* by your side! Recently my husband's friend served a delicious green vegetable called broccoli di rape – I can't wait to learn how to cook with it.

Meenakshi Singh

HEALTHY AND DELICIOUS!

I am totally in love with your magazine – it's always awesome! I'm a big foodie but have to always watch my diet since I keep gaining weight, but I find your magazine very useful, as it helps me manage my calorie count and also gives me yummy dishes to try which are light. In the May issue, I found the Mediterranean cooking feature (*Modern Mediterranean*) very helpful as it gave a new twist to local tastes.

Farah Ameer

TALK TO US!

Email us on feedback@bbcgoodfoodme.com with your thoughts, views and comments.

You can also connect with us on social media! Find us on:



@bbcgoodfoodme

Or, you could write to us at:

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BBC Good Food Middle East.
Dubai Media City, Building 4, Office G08
PO Box 13700, Dubai, UAE.

We asked you...

Facebook poll

What is your favourite foodie activity when on holiday?

60% Eating authentic food

27% Dining at local restaurants

13% Shopping at local markets



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Foodie file

What's hot and happening in the culinary world, here and around the globe.



Nofara café

DINE IN THE CITY

✴ The latest pizza joint to hit Dubai is Russo's, a New-York style pizzeria at Jumeirah Centre. We can vouch for the eggplant rollatini – breaded stuffed eggplant with ricotta and all-natural mozzarella cheese in tomato cream sauce – and the XL pizza (28 inches) which has one of the best pizza sauces we've come across! Gluten-free pizzas are available too. Call 04-3856549.

✴ Nofara café (shown here) is the newest café to open up in Jumeirah Lakes Towers, and offers wholesome international cuisine with an Arabic twist, plus an indoor shisha area. The menu features interesting combinations like chicken and pesto sandwiches, Moroccan chicken in pastry, kofta pops with dips, and gluten-and dairy-free cakes and breads, as well as fresh smoothies and Nofara's signature coffee blend. Visit nofaracafe.com.

✴ Burgers in Abu Dhabi just got a lot more gourmet with the opening of Burger Hood. The restaurant, which resembles an American diner with a twist, is all set to serve gourmet burgers with fillings including free range chicken and grass-fed beef. Try it with classic milkshakes and hand cut American russet potato fries. Call 02-4499990.

✴ If you're looking for a classy, chic bar and lounge to head to this month, check out the newly opened Sake No Hana Dubai by Crystal, located on the ground floor of Souk Al Bahar – ideal for a drink and authentic Japanese bites. Call 04- 4327808.



This just in:

The gorgeous bone china plate from Seletti (Dhs135), a quirky design brand from New Zealand, is part of the carefully curated collection at the newly opened Sauce gifts store at Wasl Square.



Britain's got an appetite – for sandwiches!

According to a poll conducted by the British Sandwich Association, the BLT is the UK's favourite sandwich. Over 3,500 people chose it on a poll that took place on BSA's Lovesarnies website, and identified the country's top ten sandwich fillings.



SUMMER SCHOOL

Afraid your teens might turn into couch potatoes over the summer? Enrol them in the Professional kitchen programme at The School of Culinary and Finishing Arts (Scafa) and you'll never hear them whine about boredom again! Young cooks from ages 18 and above, can enjoy a 13-week programme which includes practical study, work placement at a leading hotel or restaurant, visa and accommodation upon request, and a government attested certificate too. Scholarships of up to 50 per cent are also available! Dhs27,500 per person, visit scafa.ae

White out!

British celebrity chef Marco Pierre White is set to well and truly make his mark in the region, with the announcement of his newest restaurant at the soon-to-launch Conrad hotel on Sheikh Zayed Road, due to open in end-August. While this outlet will be similar to his grill in Fairmont Bab al Bahr in Abu Dhabi, he has just signed up with Rmal Hospitality to launch a variety of concepts around the region – watch this space for more info!

SAVE THE DATE

Looking for creative ways to use savoury oils and a selection of vinegars when cooking? Crescendo Dubai, a specialty oil and vinegar store at Souk Madinat Jumeirah, will be hosting a Cook and Taste event on June 19 and 26. Learn how to use a variety of oils and vinegar products for barbecues, indulge in a five-course meal, and get tips and tricks from the experts. Dhs150 per person, visit facebook.com/CrescendoDubai.

Home # What's trending



#whydon'ttheymakethat

Initiated by Jimmy Fallon, American comedian and television personality, the twitter hashtag asked viewers to tweet the one thing that hasn't been made as yet. The two most interesting foodie responses were USDA organic food for dogs and a push up can for Pringles, which lets you push the crisps up as the can keeps emptying – these definitely got us thinking as well!



Food that's beautiful to look at seems to taste better than food that isn't.

- Emeril Lagasse, American celebrity chef and TV presenter

LUXE ICE CREAM

Häagen-Dazs is turning on the heat this summer with the launch of an exclusive House of Häagen-Dazs luxury experience at its stores, highlighting its gourmet Secret Sensations range, with flavours like Chocolate Fondant, Crème Brûlée and Meringue & Raspberry Fondant. We can't decide what we're more excited about – these couture flavours, or their dishy new brand ambassador, Hollywood heartthrob Bradley Cooper!





DEPARTURES

TIME		DESTINATION	FLIGHT	REMARKS
NOW	● ●	BICE	HILTON DUBAI	BOARDING
NOW	● ●	PACHANGA	HILTON DUBAI	BOARDING
NOW	● ●	SKYBAR	HILTON DUBAI	BOARDING
THEN	● ●	MADRID	AADSI WSO	DELAYED
THEN	● ●	HONG KONG	LX922 FIS	
THEN	● ●	LYON	AA765 AIG	ON TIME

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Aisle file

Gorgeous gourmet buys, kitchen gear, foodie accessories, home décor and more.



Forget buying store-bought ice lollies – making your own fresh, fruit juice lollies is easy as, with the Lick and sip lolly maker. Dhs20, at **LAKELAND**.



Ever tried Turkish coffee with a twist? Check out newly opened premium Turkish coffee boutique Selamlique Istanbul, where you will find a selection of gourmet Turkish coffees in delectable flavours such as chocolate, cinnamon, cardamom and mastic. Dhs45 for a 125g tin box, at **SELAMLIQUE ISTANBUL**, Al Wasl Road.



Summer's here! This portable Lurch Green Power cold press juice extractor, which retains nutrients while minimising wastage, is a must-have for the season, to make chilled fruit and vegetable juices. Dhs210, at **JASHANMAL STORES**.



This Gold leaf votive holder will give your dining table an elegant touch. Dhs79, at **INDIGO LIVING**.

Brighten up your kitchen this summer, with this range of vibrant kitchen accessories from **2XL FURNITURE**, including a whisk, grater, peeler and scoop. From Dhs6 each.



Dads will love using accessories from this compact Brink barbecue set – it makes a perfect Father's Day gift! Dhs350, at **BLOOMINGDALE'S HOMES**.



Plan an Asian-themed date night and make your own maki rolls and sashimi at home, to serve it in this stylish Jill Shaddock sushi set which includes a ceramic platter, shallow vessel, wooden chopsticks and a ceramic chopstick holder. Dhs560, at **PABLOBLUE.CO.UK**.

Compiled by NICOLA MONTEATH | Photographs SUPPLIED



There's nothing like a selection of macarons to perk up your day! We love these bright little confections in unique flavours like salted butter caramel, passion fruit and chocolate, raspberry, Tahiti vanilla and yuzu. Dhs105 for a box of eight, at **INES PÂTISSERIE**, Wasl Square.



Light up this Belle Fleur white orchid tea candle to release a subtle floral aroma in your home. Dhs249, at **THE ONE**.



Here to help

Our expert chef Andy Campbell offers practical advice to tackle all your cooking dilemmas.



Q Can you share a simple recipe for making oat cookies?

A. Oats are often grown in poor soil conditions which makes it a hardy cereal grain. I use a vegan recipe of 55g self raising flour, 55g golden caster sugar, 30g rolled oats, 55g soya margarine and 55g seed and nut mix to make 12 cookies. Rub the flour, sugar, oats and margarine until it becomes a dough. Mix in the seeds and nuts. Roll the dough into a sausage shape, on a board, and cut into 1cm thick rounds. Carefully place on a greased baking tray and sprinkle a little nut mix on each cookie. Bake at 190C for 15 minutes or until golden brown. Cool on a wire rack before storing in an air tight container.

Q What is the secret to melt-in-your-mouth flavourful beef in a casserole?

A. A casserole is the French method of cooking in a cast iron pot with a lid, and is often sealed with a mixture of flour and water to keep the juices from evaporating. If cooking in the oven, set it on a low temperature to achieve delicious, tender meat – even though it takes longer. The alternatives are to either use a pressure cooker or a slow cooker pot. I have recently invested in a pressure cooker and found that it produces wonderful results! I usually brown the meat and

vegetables before adding a good quality stock, and I always discard the vegetables once they are cooked, as the vegetables soak up the sauce. I then add a freshly cooked batch of vegetables to the cooked meat. This is then reduced once the sauce is syrupy, seasoned and garnished with chopped parsley.

Q Do you have a sweet sauce recipe for salmon, that will keep the fish healthy and moist?

A. I like my salmon moist and pink on the inside as well! To get this, you can glaze the salmon with a marinade of two tablespoons each of light soya sauce and mirin, mixed with a tablespoon of Dijon mustard and a tablespoon of good quality honey. Marinate for an hour and grill the salmon to your preferred doneness.



Q I love avocados, but they go bad so quickly. Is there any way that they can be preserved for a longer time period?

A. I've previously worked with frozen vacuum packed avocados, but for home use, zip lock freezer bags work best! Mash five ripe avocados with either five tablespoons of lemon or lime juice. Spoon the mixed pulp into freezer bags, date and label, squeeze all the air out of the bags and freeze. This will keep for up to one year.

Q How do I get the perfect cream cheese frosting for cakes? Mine always ends up too runny!

A. Going back to my college pastry days, I still remember a few key points. One is to measure your ingredients accurately, take your time and check twice that they are right. Allow the butter to soften at room temperature before mixing with the cream cheese, and don't over mix. Gradually mix in the icing sugar and vanilla, a little at a time and allow to stand in the fridge for at least half an hour before piping. A pastry chef gave me this perfect cream cheese recipe – 450g cream cheese, 115g softened butter, 250g icing sugar and 1 tsp vanilla extract.

Q Is there a way of preventing white button mushrooms from blackening while cooking them?

A. Mushrooms contain at least 90 per cent water. That's why you should make sure you let them dry on a wire rack before cooking. Also, never wash with water, always wipe them over with damp kitchen paper – this keeps it from becoming soggy. Cook on a medium to high heat, and if there is too much liquid in your sauté pan, strain the mushrooms in a colander before returning to a hot pan to finish the cooking process.



Andy's ingredient of the month
European sea trout is now in season, and available at fish counters in Union cooperative and Carrefour. Eat it grilled or poached with a cherry tomato, roasted hazel nut and smoked paprika salsa.

Ask us & win! Got a cooking question you need answered? Send your culinary query to feedback@bbcgoodfoodme.com and be in with a chance to win a dinner voucher for two, worth over Dhs500, for a Seafood night at Anise restaurant, InterContinental Hotel, Dubai Festival City. To find out more about Chef Andy, visit chefandycampbell.com.

*Winner will be chosen on a random basis.

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On test: Indoor grills

Essential home gadgets reviewed.

Severin PG 2790 barbecue grill

The choice of indoor barbecue grills for home use today is massive and anyone should think carefully about their lifestyle before buying one. You need to think about safety if you have children, robustness and, perhaps most of all, ease of operation and cleaning – the Severin grill delivers on all of these points, but does have a few shortcomings.

What we liked: The lightweight grill was easy to operate, and has an optional base stand with two cooking height adjustments, which allows table-top use. The overall build quality of the product is quite good. The large grill wire allows a reasonable quantity of food to be grilled at once, and basically works by putting water into the grill pan, after which the water helps to cool down the grill pan, reduce the build-up of smoke and create less odours as well. The indication mark on the grill allows you to keep a track on the water level, to ensure it is always kept between the minimum and maximum level. It's great for grilling fish which it does well and fast, and with minimum odour emission.

What we didn't like: The need to fill a tray with water seemed dangerous – water and electricity are bad companions! The grill also takes up a lot of counter space in a small kitchen.

To buy: Dhs199, available at leading electronic stores.



User tip

Be careful the grill doesn't tip over when in use, as dripping water can cause a hazard.

Tefal Meat Grill ultra-compact

This is a great alternative to an outdoor barbecue grill and is perfect not only for those who don't want to miss out on their bbq fix in the summer, but also for grilling sandwiches. Compact and efficient, the grill is thoughtfully designed with features like a vertical storage facility (you can stash it away in a cupboard standing up), and removable grill plates.

What we liked: While the grill can be stored neatly in a kitchen cabinet or corner, it's likely you will be using it daily, as it is fast – it grills vegetables to perfection in just minutes. The grill operates on three cooking levels – the first allows you to warm up food, the second cooks food, while the third lets you sear. The removable juice tray that is kept in front of the grill is a great accessory, as it gathers all the juices from your meats, while keeping them moist inside. There is a panel on top showing approximate grilling times for different foods, from skewers and chicken drumsticks, to steak, fish and vegetables, which is very useful for first-time indoor grill users. The removable plates make it easy to clean and use.

What we didn't like: The size of an average sandwich toaster, this grill is only suitable for small portions, and has to be used multiple times if you need to cook anything more than two portions.

To buy: Dhs229 at Ace Hardware stores.



User tip

Make sure to rinse and wipe the grill with oil before using.

Kitchen Expert multi-plate grill

This snazzy indoor grill looks more like a raclette grill, and is equipped with four interchangeable plates – a full-sized grill plate, half grill plate to be used in combination with other plates, half stone grill plate for a smoky stone-grill flavour, half pancake plate (cooks four pancakes simultaneously), and eight non-stick raclette pans.

What we liked: The Kitchen Expert multi-plate grill is a healthier way to cook, without using much oil and fat. You can use the main grill plate for larger portions of food, or use one of the smaller plates to prepare small pancakes or omelettes – it's quite a fun experience! Vegetables or meat can be grilled, topped with cheese, and placed inside. You can also use the top grill simultaneously, making it a multi-functional gadget. It is quite straightforward to clean and use, and I liked that I could cook easily with the help of the adjustable thermostat temperature control.

What we didn't like: Limited amounts of food can be prepared at once, in the eight small plates provided, so it is not recommended if you are cooking for more than four people at once. It also takes a bit of time and patience to prepare, as the plates for the raclette are small.

To buy: Dhs339, available at Citrusstv.com.



User tip

Finish all your prep before you start grilling so you can cook it all at once – this makes its use more efficient.

What products would you like to see reviewed in the magazine? ✉ Tell us on feedback@bbcgoodfoodme.com or [facebook.com/bbcgoodfoodme](https://www.facebook.com/bbcgoodfoodme).



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3's a trend: LITERARY CAFÉS

NEW PAGE

We take a look at some of the most interesting foodie trends in town.

Coffee and books are a marriage made in heaven. While there have been moans aplenty about the lack of 'culture' in Dubai (we don't agree, by the way – we think there is an amazing, burgeoning arts and culture scene here), as well as limited (but growing) options when it comes to casual cafés where you can find a relaxed atmosphere and good food, both gaps seem to have been recently filled up in one fell swoop, with the opening of a few different outlets that revolve around books and reading. We check out three new(ish) openings which offer different experiences, with one thing in common – a love of literature!

Hugo Café

Located in Palm Strip Mall on Jumeirah beach road, Hugo Café pays homage to French poet Victor Hugo. Designed to look and feel like a quaint Parisian café – complete with colourful vintage posters of old French movies and musicals, black and white photos of Moulin rouge, plaques with Parisian street names on the walls, and classic French music in the background! The literary touch comes from quotations from Victor Hugo on tablemats, and a collection of books on poems and literature, and the UAE, which are stacked on a bookshelf in the centre. Open for breakfast, lunch and dinner, the menu is more restaurant-style than café, and features French Vietnamese cuisine with dishes such as Vietnamese seafood wonton with honey coriander sauce, papaya salad, coconut shrimp curry with rice, and mille-feuille. A selection of mocktails and hot beverages



including toffee nut and chai-lattes are also served, making it a perfect spot for a coffee with the girls or a bite before the school run. www.hugocafe.com.

Archive Café

Housed in a converted facilities building in Safa Park (access is from Gate 5, the one parallel to Sheikh Zayed Road), this unique establishment is positioned as a library café. The clean minimalist interiors feature a large communal table in the middle, as well as café-style chairs and tables along the all-glass walls which flood the interiors with natural light, and offer views of Safa Park's lush, green grounds. The bookshelves which line the inside walls are home to a wide variety – with a leaning towards coffee table books on art and design. Popular with the ladies-who-lunch and creative types alike, the vibe is arty and relaxed at the same time. The food, which offers a twist on café classics (open sandwiches and brioche burgers, anyone?), plus a range of salads, is served pub-style, in seriously large portions. While wholesome and hearty, it didn't wow us in the taste stakes however. But, that's not likely to stop us from going back there, not just because it is the sort of place you want to hang out at, but also for the series of interesting events they host, from organic food talks, to pottery classes and calligraphy workshops. www.thearchive.ae.

Bookmunch Café & bookshop

This colourful café in the community-centric Wasl Square complex was born out of owner Dareen Charafeddine's love of books. Brightly coloured sofas, and blond wood fittings create a cosy, homely atmosphere, with rows of carefully selected books – which are available both for sale and for reading in the café – covering everything from fiction, to food, children's books and self-help. A family-friendly place, a highlight at BookMunch is the tent-like reading corner for kids, where children are encouraged to lose themselves in a book for hours. The menu, which focuses on fresh, homemade and healthy, includes breakfast items like the delicious Bircher muesli, poached eggs and homemade granola, plus salads, soups and burgers, and a fantastic cake selection with the hero being the carrot and courgette cake. All the food is freshly prepared, using family recipes, and natural ingredients. With free wi-fi, and regular events like reading sessions for children, and book signings, this is a haven for foodies and book-lovers alike. www.bookmunchcafe.com.



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Tried & tasted

Each month, we review two of the city's top tables.

Modern British



Where: **Wheeler's of St. James's, DIFC**

What's it like: Marco Pierre White's name on the door is what may have drawn people to this restaurant at first, but it's the food that will make them keep coming back. Keeping it simple on the décor front, with classic white linen, marble bar counters, and a nod to the seafood theme in the wave-like ceiling fixtures, the restaurant offers a sophisticated ambience.

The refreshed summer menu features a variety of seafood of course, but a range of meat items to satisfy non-fish lovers too. I opted for the roast quail breast and leg with hazelnut and young leaves for starters – and thoroughly enjoyed the tender, melt-in-the-mouth meat. My partner couldn't resist the marinated burrata and tomato tart which was polished off in minutes. For mains, I went with the oven baked cod and pepper coulis and sauce grenoble while he chose the corn fed chicken with creamed cabbage and thyme jus, and we shared two sides of parsley new potatoes and dressed green beans. The fish was flaky and light, with the flavourful pepper coulis setting it off perfectly, and the chicken was juicy and tender, but the standout of the meal was the baby potatoes! So deliciously sweet, you just know it is seasonal and fresh, lightly tossed with parsley – I could have just eaten that and gone home happy! Just goes to show how tasty simple food done well, can be. In fact, I

wish I had, as the summer pudding with berries which we shared for dessert, while fresh, was a bit too tart for my liking. That, and the service, which was a bit hit-and-miss, would be the only blips on my Wheeler's radar.

If you want to go: Around Dhs600 for 3-course dinner for two, without drinks. Call 04-3860899.

- Sudeshna Ghosh

Best for:
An elegant yet relaxed evening



Where: **The Rivington Bar and Grill, Souk Madinat Jumeirah**

What's it like: This outpost of the popular UK chain, located in Madinat Jumeirah, offers a gorgeous outdoor terrace overlooking the water ways, which is where my dining partner and I sat on the evening we visited. If you find it too hot for alfresco dining, the indoors is no less appealing – with the vibe of a restaurant by the wharf, but with a contemporary twist in the quirky neon-lit quotes on the wall, a typical Rivi touch.

To begin the meal, we shared the eggs benedict – an all-time favourite – and roasted sea scallops, which were served atop a minted pea and tomato dressing. The dressing and cherry tomatoes were sweet, and beautifully set off the cooked-to-perfection salty scallops.

For mains, I ordered the salmon bomb with egg butter sauce, a generous portion served in an iron skillet-like bowl. The deep fried salmon ball was crusty on the outside and tender inside, with a hint of sweetness, while the egg butter sauce was light and tasted great with the bed of spinach underneath. My partner was sold on the 250-day old Black Angus ribeye, which was juicy and moist, and served with hand-cut chips and Béarnaise sauce. So full we were almost bursting, we knew we shouldn't have ordered desserts, but decided to share one of our favourite British desserts – Sticky toffee pudding. There's no better way to end a meal, than with a delectable pudding with hot toffee sauce, teamed with vanilla ice cream.

If you want to go: Around Dhs450 for 3-course dinner for two, without drinks. Call 04-3666464.

- Nicola Monteath

Best for:
A casual night with friends

Flavours of the month

Our pick of the best restaurant offers, promotions and deals this month.

* Flavours from France

Popular French eatery Paul café have introduced a selection of new dishes such as Salade de crevettes a la mangue (green salad with poached shrimp and lemon mayonnaise dressing), Poulet roti aux amandes (tender almond-flavoured chicken breast with camembert cheese), and the popular Tartine au saumon – an open faced sandwich.

Available daily, call 04-3414844.



Paul café

* Acting up!

The newly opened Act Dubai, located on the 42 and 43 level of Shangri-La Hotel, Dubai, is now open on Sundays as well! The highest theatre club in the world serves a spectacular selection of Peruvian food including crispy quinoa coated prawns with passion fruit rocoto, and Parrilla de Mariscos, grilled seasonal seafood with spices from the Peruvian Sierra.

Open on Sunday and Thursday, call 04-8119900.

* Club gourmet

Not just a glamorous nightspot, Cavalli Club offers an impressive Italian menu too – and it's just had a revamp. The creative additions to the menu include a mouthwatering antipasti trilogy – lobster Catalana, pan-fried octopus and burrata; a pasta selection that includes zebra print tortello in a nod to the venue's founder; and a delectable grissini crusted sole topped with julienne-thin potato chips that you won't forget in a hurry!

Prices are à la carte. Call 800-CAVALLI.



* Take a break

If you're shopping at The One at Khalidiya Theatre, make sure you stop by the restaurant to try the new dishes on the menu like Tom Yam goong soup, spicy crayfish salad, and steak and Swiss cheese panini.

Available daily, call 02- 6816500.



* Sporting spirit

Get into game mode at the Nezessausi grill, Al Manzil Hotel with their new menu for the season. 'Kick off' features dishes like fried shrimp salad, while 'half time' means mains like wagyu beef pie or the house specialty, Tomahawk steak. Regulars can get a loyalty card to enjoy discounts and offers. Nezessausi is also the venue for Sports Talk ME magazine's monthly quiz nights.

Prices are à la carte. Call 04-4285888.

* An Argentine brunch

Gaucha has recently launched its Friday brunch which begins with a refreshing Bloody Mary cocktail, and a selection of unlimited starters including Latin American breads and fresh Ecuadorian, seabass and tuna ceviche spoons. Indulge in a hot parrillada selection of chorizo, while you decide on a main course, from choices like a trip of steak medallions, Churrasco De Ancho, slow grilled with chimichurri, and grilled tuna loin with roasted pepper salad and crispy capers, followed by unlimited desserts.

Available on Fridays, from Dhs340 per head. Call 04-4227898.

* Quick-fix Japanese

Not sure where to take your clients for a business lunch? Visit Tokyo@thetowers, ETSushi or Harry Ghatto's at Emirates Towers, to try the Express lunch promotion which includes a two-course menu of mouthwatering Japanese dishes.

Available Sunday through Thursday, from Dhs80 per head. Call 04-3198088.

* All-day breakfast

Tavern pub at Sheraton Abu Dhabi Hotel and Resort is aware of people's cravings for breakfast dishes throughout the day. Which is why, they now serve a typical English breakfast for you to indulge in, as and when you like.

Available daily, from Dhs39 per head. Call 02-6773333.



✴ Bring on the biryani!

Renowned Indian restaurant Zafran is running a 'Biryani and more' promotion through the month, as part of which you can try out a range of unique biryanis from around India, including a rosewater and saffron marinated Chicken Awadhi biryani, Bengal-inspired Prawn dum biryani, and a vegetarian Subz dum biryani, to cater to all tastes.

Offered until July 5 at Dubai Marina Mall and Mirdiff City Centre outlets, prices start from Dhs40. Call 04-3997357.



✴ Wild wild west

Take the family out to The Rainforest café at The Dubai Mall, to try out new dishes such as the spicy raging thunder buffalo wings, wild river salmon, jungle steak and shrimp, and a stunning sparkling volcano dessert, in a unique tropical setting – we guarantee the kids will love it!

Available daily, call 04-3308515.



✴ All-you-can-eat

Calling all Japanese food lovers! Benihana at Amwaj Rotana now have an eat-till-you-drop night – Kuidaore and Japas – where you can indulge in signature dishes from the restaurant, as well as tapas with a twist.

Available from Saturday through Monday, and Wednesday, from Dhs189 per head. Call 04-44283089.

✴ Crustacean indulgence

Hot foot to Seafood Market, Le Meridien Dubai, this summer to relish a variety of crab dishes such as Devon crabs baked in spicy Thai curry sauce, deep-fried with garlic and chilli or XO sauce, or steamed with spring onions and black pepper sauce.

Available until July 31, Dhs380 per kg. Call 04-7022490.



✴ Irish fare

Looking for a brunch with a difference? Head to the D'licious brunch at The D Bar and Grill, Level 1 McGettigan's DWTC, to try traditional Anglo-Irish dishes with a twist. On the menu are meats such as Irish black Angus beef and Welsh lamb – cooked on a large char grill – as well as an assortment of cheese sourced from Irish farms. *Available on Fridays for Dhs399 per head, call 04-3780808.*



✴ All aboard!

Dubai's most stylish dinner cruise boat, Bateaux Dubai, has launched a spectacular new menu with innovative, international flavours – think asparagus risotto with morel mushroom and white truffle foam, Thai crab with minted avocado and Arabic mezze, Atlantic lobster ravioli, braised lamb shoulder, mango-coriander-chilli cheesecake, sautéed strawberries with carrot cake, and gorgonzola and toasted walnut tart.

Available daily for dinner, from Dhs245 per person, call 04-3154777.



Taste of Tuscany

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DUBAI

On my bookshelf. . .



★ We ask the pros to tell us about the cookbook

they can't live without.

Chef Christophe Prudhomme, Executive Chef at Al Bustan Rotana

My favourite cookbook is Larousse de la cuisine – this great book includes all the basics in French cooking. It's truly essential not only because it teaches old original recipes, but also because it teaches the reader how to be innovative in the kitchen.

Watch this:



★ **Take home chef Fatafeat channel at 4.30pm daily**

This reality TV-meets-cooking show sees Australian chef Curtis Stone walk into a grocery store, and surprise a stranger by asking if they are cooking a special meal for someone in every episode. He then offers to buy groceries and cook for them. Curtis and the guest go back to the surprised shopper's home, to cook together. We like the fun, relaxed way in which they work together in the kitchen, the fact that each recipe is shown step-by-step, and of course the expression of the loved one being surprised at the end!



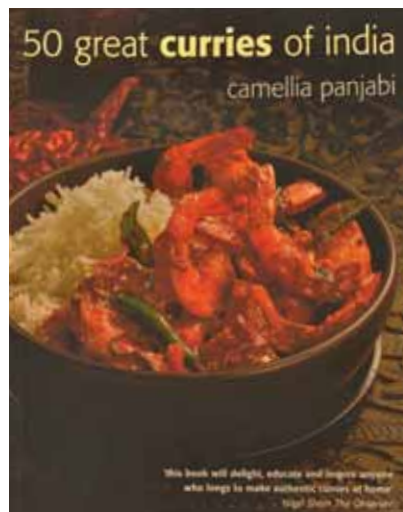
Download this:

★ **Cook's Illustrated Free for iPhones and iPads**

This handy recipe app has it all – from the requisite categories such as seafood, meat, pasta, poultry and salads, to marinades, and a separate grilling and barbecue category, with recipes such as charcoal-grilled salmon fillets. The app also has a Taste test section where recommended brands are listed for cooking ingredients. To simplify your next food shopping trip, save your favourite recipes, and add to the shopping list – the app automatically adds the ingredients to the list.

Culina-reads

Reviews of the latest cookbooks, food shows and mobile apps.



★ **50 great curries of India** by Camellia Panjabi (Motivate Publishing)

There are innumerable books on Indian cooking around the world, but it is a rare one that manages to – or even attempts to – successfully encapsulate the diversity of the cuisine. Much more than its title lets on – yes, there are 50 fabulous curry recipes in there – the bestselling book offers an insider view of the ingredients, culinary influences, health benefits and cooking traditions that have shaped Indian cuisine as we know it. Camellia comes from a family of restaurateurs in London, which makes her writing and approach to recipes relevant to non-Indian readers, but the book is no less interesting for aficionados of Indian cooking, such is the wealth of knowledge of regional cuisine that it contains. Her genuine love of food comes through right from the beginning, when she talks about her childhood memories of school lunches, through to her experiences looking after marketing for one of India's best luxury

hotel chains, and consequently opening restaurants around the country. The hints and tips on making curry, the list of spices and herbs and chillies, makes this a truly complete guide to curry-making. On a mission to educate people that there is so much more to Indian curries than the Punjabi butter chicken, the recipes draw from all corners of the country, whether it's Sindhi gramflour curry, Bengali fish curry, Parsee chicken curry, Chettinad egg curry, or Konkani crab curry. Now re-released as a 10th anniversary edition, with updated recipes and photographs, this book is a must-have for anyone who is interested in learning about culinary India.

Dhs60, available at Jashanmal bookstores.



★ **Tana Ramsay home made** (HarperCollins)

Her claim to celebrity may be as Gordon Ramsay's other half, but with this book, Tana proves she is an accomplished cook in her own right. The book contains a

compilation of easy, simple recipes that she relies on, punctuated with personalised revelations and family photos that endear Tana to the reader – she comes across as a busy mother juggling work and home like anyone else, and endeavouring to put a wholesome meal on the table for her family. Therefore, the recipes aren't fussy, and neither is Tana – she makes it quite clear at the outset that the recipes aren't set in stone. Divided according to core ingredients, plus with a few extras like soups, pizza and pasta, the recipes are the sort a typical modern, urban family would enjoy – mainly British home-style food, with a few international twists thrown into the mix. This is an inspirational godsend for busy homemakers.

Dhs82, available at Jashanmal bookstores.



★ **The Dukan Diet Life Plan** by Dr Pierre Dukan (Hodder & Stoughton)

The diet plan that took the world by storm a couple of years back isn't showing any signs of

waning in popularity. This book is a comprehensive guide through the plan, which focuses on a protein-rich diet in a phased manner, to enable weight loss. With step-by-step instructions, lists of allowed and disallowed foods, detailed menus, exercise advice and Q&As to tackle any queries, and a section dedicated to diet-friendly recipes (the stunning photography makes going on the diet seem actually quite delicious). While a lot of the advice is practical and adaptable to most lifestyles, it is nonetheless quite an extreme approach to weight management, so we'd recommend getting proper medical advice before embarking on this – or for that matter, any other – diet.

Dhs93, available at Jashanmal bookstores.

The Doha diaries

The Art of Dining

Our Doha-based columnist has his finger on the pulse of the city's foodie scene.



For years, there's been a long association between art and restaurants. Art feeds the soul. And so does food. In the same way that art is a passion that we like to share with our friends, so is food.

Of late, we've seen as much of a scramble to promote culture in Qatar, as we have seen an upsurge in new restaurants. I don't think this is a coincidence. Last month, Doha saw the opening of 'Anima Lounge', a bright and

airy restaurant serving up dishes made with fresh ingredients, with an emphasis on healthy food, which is attached to 'Anima Gallery' on The Pearl-Qatar, a contemporary art gallery showcasing local and regional artists.

And it's not the first. This year, Michelin starred French Chef Alain Ducasse opened the doors to IDAM, his first restaurant in the Middle East, and the jewel in the crown of the prestigious Museum of Islamic Art. Serving up Mediterranean cuisine with influences from the Middle East, the restaurant is designed by world renowned designer, Philippe Starck.

But if you really want to see how art fuses with food seamlessly, then look no further than Quisine. Created in 2012 by Michelin Starred Chef Guy Savoy, Quisine has art at the heart of its design. The restaurant itself is monochrome, with almost the only colour coming from the vivid artwork enveloping you. Here, fine dining isn't just a meal anymore, it's an experience. Savoy once commented that "cooking is the art of instantly transforming historical products into pleasure", and truly, each dish on his menu is a work of art.

Another great restaurant which explores the relationship between art and food, is La Varenne, a French brasserie located in West Bay's Tornado Tower. As soon as you walk through the doors, you're greeted with a stunning Damien Hirst, from his famous butterfly collection 'In and Out of Love'. When asked about the relationship between food and art, Hurst once said, "whenever I've made any money, I've always celebrated with food. I believe that anything done well is art, and great food is like great art. but without the evidence".

The dictionary says that art is 'The expression or application of human creative skill and imagination'. If this is true, then surely the creative skill that goes into creating great food means that in some way food is art. Looks like Damien Hirst was right all along.

- Jonathan Parsons is co-owner and editor of Qatar's largest online restaurant guide, www.diningindoha.com.

The latest food news and happenings in the city

All new menu

The trendy New York steakhouse, Astor Grill at The St. Regis Doha, has recently launched a set menu titled A Taste of Astor Grill. Indulge in a three course set menu of fresh fish and seafood for starters, premium quality beef cooked on a charcoal grill, and classics including the New York cheesecake, as you watch the chefs cook your meal and perform culinary theatre at the kitchen, Available from Sunday-Friday, from QR280 per person. Call +974 44460105.



Spanish mania

The Grill, an all-day dining restaurant at Grand Hyatt Doha, has taken on a Spanish theme this June. Paella-lovers can try out the special menu on Wednesdays, while those who love tapas and other Spanish delicacies can visit the restaurant on a Sunday, to try out authentic favourites and unlimited Sangria. The restaurant will also be hosting a Spanish brunch – Eviva Espana brunch – on June 14, where guests

can try tortillas and other signature dishes while listening to Spanish tunes. QR100 for the paella promotion, from QR150 on Sundays for tapas and paella, and from QR115 for the brunch. Call +974 4448 1240/1241.

New seafood delights

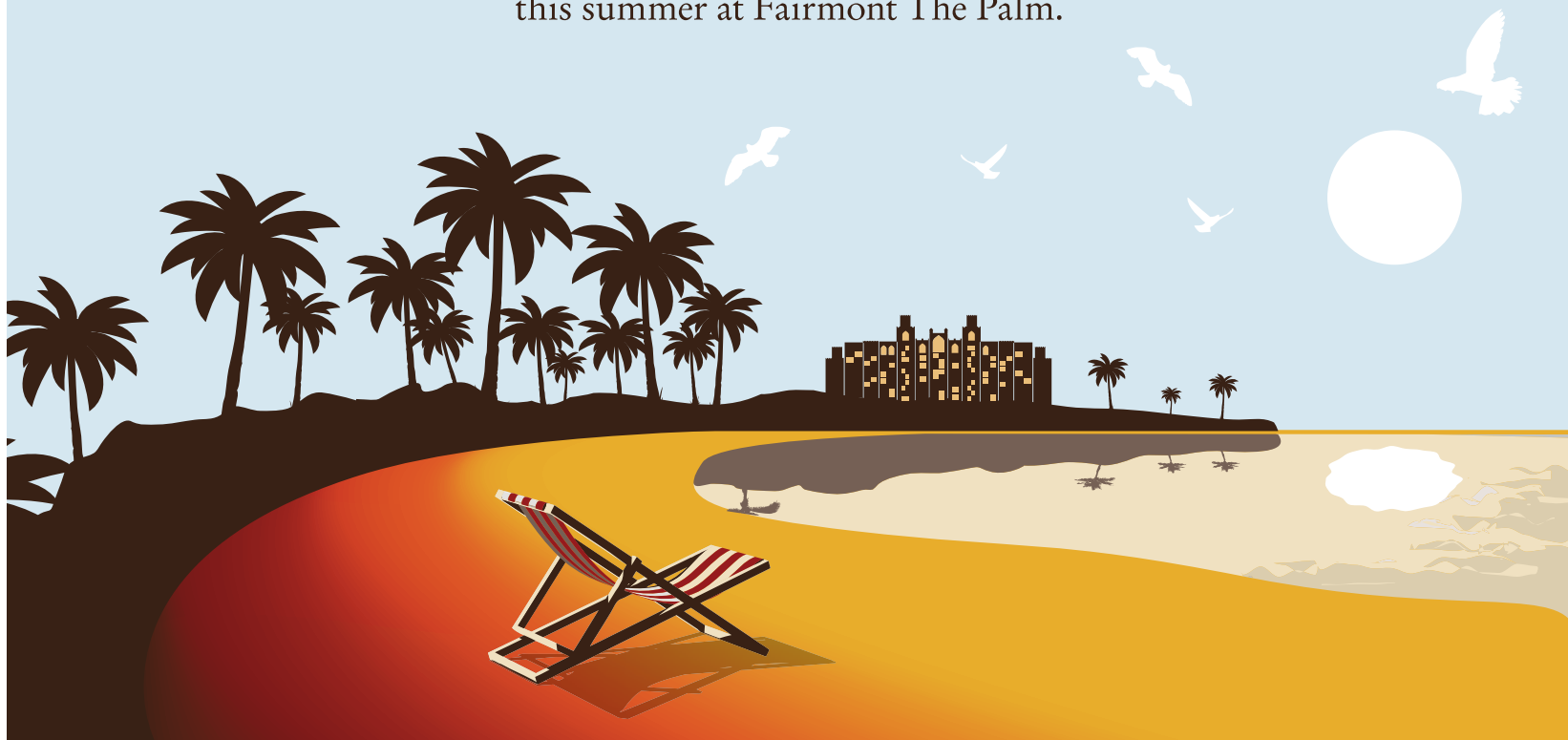
The newly-opened Al Sanbouk Fish Market at Al Jasra Boutique Hotel, part of Souq Waqif Boutique Hotels, offers a wide variety of fresh seafood. The word 'Al Sanbouk' is derived from the word dhow, with the restaurant interiors featuring marine-themed décor. Savour a selection of fresh fish, lobster, shrimp, crabs and seafood, cooked at live cooking stations in Italian and Thai style, or instead choose some of the highlights on the menu such as soft shell crab in green Asian curry, fresh mussels in marinara sauce and deep fried calamari in herb butter. Call +974 44336666.



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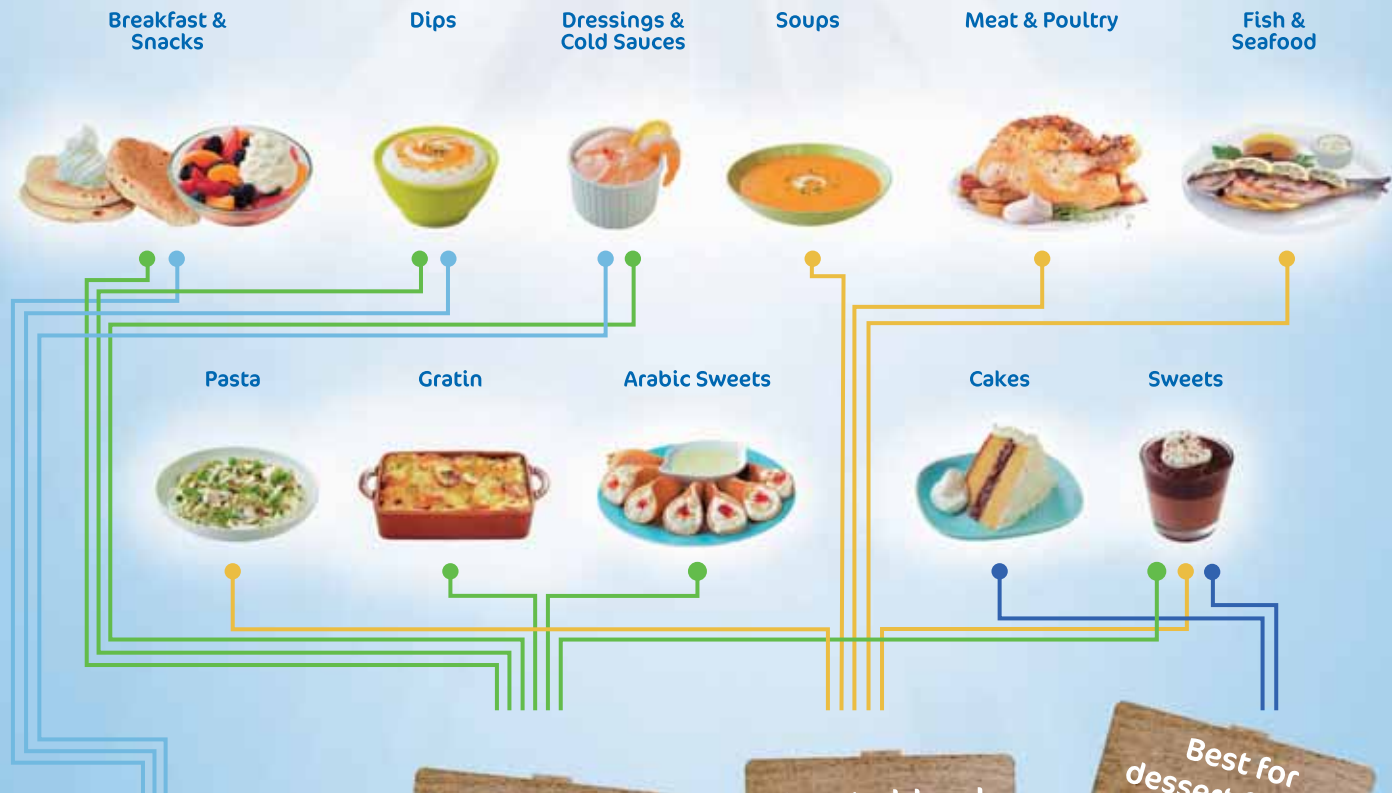
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Discover the versatility of creams.

Vegetable vegan
biryani with carrot
salad, recipe p41

IN THIS SECTION



* Quick, fresh
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grain, barley, P31



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Home Cooking

Inspiring recipes for easy
everyday meals and stylish
weekend entertaining

Make it tonight

Quick, satisfying and good-value weeknight suppers. Recipes SARA BUENFELD Photographs WILL HEAP

Lamb & potato kebabs with minty broad beans

SERVES 4 • PREP 15 MINS •

COOK 20 MINS **Easy**  **Low cal** **Vit C** **Folate**

Fibre **Good for you** **2 of 5-a-day**

200g baby new potatoes, halved

250g lean lamb neck, cut into 2.5cm dice

1 red pepper, deseeded and cut into large chunks

2 garlic cloves, crushed

1 tbsp olive oil

1 lemon, ½ juiced, ½ cut into wedges

600g fresh or frozen broad beans

2 tbsp mint sauce

1 Bring a pan of water to the boil, tip in the potatoes and cook for 8-10 mins until tender. Scoop out the potatoes, keeping the cooking water on a gentle boil. Put the lamb, potatoes and pepper in a bowl. Add the garlic, oil and lemon juice. Season, then toss well to coat.

2 Heat a griddle pan over a medium-high heat. Thread the lamb, pepper and potatoes onto 8 pre-soaked kebab skewers. When the pan is hot, grill the kebabs for 3-4 mins on each side until nicely charred around the edges.

3 Add the broad beans to the boiling water and cook for 5 mins. Drain and pop the beans out of their skins if you

have time. Mix with the mint sauce.

4 Serve the kebabs on top of the beans with lemon wedges for squeezing over.

PER SERVING 329 kcals, protein 26g, carbs 28g, fat 13g, sat fat 5g, fibre 10g, sugar 6g, salt 0.2g

MAKE IT DIFFERENT

Minty lamb, broad bean & feta wraps for 4

Toss the lamb pieces with the garlic, olive oil, lemon juice and mint sauce. Heat a griddle pan and cook the lamb for 3-4 mins each side until cooked.

Meanwhile, cook and pod the broad beans and warm **4 Mediterranean wraps**. Fill each wrap with the lamb pieces, beans, a **dollop of Greek yoghurt** and **25g crumbled feta**.



Food styling LIZZIE HARRIS | Styling TONY HUTCHINSON



Linguine with watercress & almond pesto

SERVES 2 ● PREP 5 MINS ●

COOK 12 MINS Easy V Fibre

200g linguine or spaghetti
85g bag watercress
1 garlic clove, roughly chopped
25g Parmesan (or vegetarian alternative), half grated, half shaved
50g toasted flaked almonds
4 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
1 tbsp lemon juice
½ tsp sugar

1 Cook the pasta following pack instructions. Meanwhile, put the

watercress and garlic in the bowl of a food processor and blend for a few secs until finely chopped. Add the grated cheese, half the almonds, the olive oil, lemon juice and sugar. Season well, then blend until you have a smooth purée consistency.

2 When the linguine is cooked, drain, reserving a cup of the cooking water. Return the pasta to the pan and pour over the pesto, using a little pasta water to loosen the sauce if necessary. Stir everything together and divide between 2 bowls. To serve, top with the shaved cheese and remaining almonds.

PER SERVING 766 kcals, protein 23g, carbs 79g, fat 40g, sat fat 7g, fibre 7g, sugar 5g, salt 0.3g >>

Cheesy bean & sweetcorn cakes with quick salsa

SERVES 4 ● PREP 15 mins ●

COOK 15 mins Easy V Low cal Fibre

400g can mixed beans in water, drained
400g can chickpeas, drained
50g mature cheddar, grated
198g can sweetcorn, drained
8 jalapeño slices from a jar, finely chopped
1 egg, beaten
Small handful of coriander, chopped
2 tbsp vegetable oil
10 cherry tomatoes, quartered
½ red onion, sliced
Juice of ½ lime
Mixed salad leaves, to serve (optional)

1 Put the beans and chickpeas in the bowl of a food processor and blend until smooth. Tip into a bowl and add the cheese, sweetcorn, jalapeños, egg and half the coriander. Season, mix well to combine, then shape into 8 patties.

2 Heat the oil in a large frying pan and cook the patties for 4 mins on each side – you may have to do this in batches. Keep them warm in the oven as you go.

3 Mix the tomatoes, onion, remaining coriander and lime juice with a little salt. Serve the cakes with salsa and salad leaves, if you like.

PER SERVING 292 kcals, protein 17g, carbs 24g, fat 13g, sat fat 4g, fibre 12g, sugar 2g, salt 1.9g

Fresh inspiration
for pasta



Sausage & mushroom pot pies

SERVES 2 • PREP 12 MINS •

COOK 40 MINS **Easy**

- 2 tsp olive oil
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 6 beef or chicken sausages
- 250g chestnut mushrooms, halved
- 1 tbsp wholegrain mustard
- 4 tbsp low-fat crème fraîche
- Small bunch of parsley, chopped
- 85g ciabatta, torn into small chunks

1 Heat half the oil in a large frying pan. Add the onion and cook for 5 mins until softened, then push to one side.

Squeeze the meat from the sausages and roll into balls. Add to the pan and fry for 5 mins until golden. Add the mushrooms and cook for 5 mins more until softened.

2 Season, then stir in the mustard, crème fraîche and 4 tbsp water. Bubble for 2 mins, then remove from the heat and scatter in the parsley.

3 Heat oven to 200C/180C fan. Transfer sausage mixture to 2 small pie dishes or 1 large baking dish. Toss the ciabatta in the remaining oil, scatter over the top of the pies and bake for 20 mins until golden and bubbling.

PER SERVING 757 kJ, protein 29g, carbs 40g, fat 53g, sat fat 20g, fibre 5g, sugar 9g, salt 4.5g



Pollack, beetroot & potato traybake with lemony crème fraîche

SERVES 4 • PREP 10 MINS •

COOK 45 MINS **Easy** **Low cal** **Folate**

- 4 small potatoes, sliced
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tsp fennel seeds, lightly crushed
- 4 beetroot, peeled and cut into wedges
- 4 pollack fillets
- Zest of ½ lemon
- 4 tbsp crème fraîche
- Small handful basil, roughly chopped

1 Heat oven to 200C/180C fan. Put the potatoes in a large baking tray and toss with the olive oil and fennel seeds. Season, arrange in a single layer, then bake for 20 mins until softened and starting to crisp.

2 Turn the potatoes over and add the beetroot, season and return to the oven for 15 mins. Place the fish in the centre, season well and rub over a little oil from the tray. Return to the oven for 10 mins more.

3 Meanwhile, sprinkle the lemon zest over the crème fraîche with a good grind of black pepper. To serve, scatter the fish with basil and dollop with some of the lemony crème fraîche.

PER SERVING 336 kJ, protein 26g, carbs 31g, fat 12g, sat fat 6g, fibre 3g, sugar 4g, salt 0.4g



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Let's eat more... barley

This cheap and nutritious grain often gets overlooked, but shouldn't! Recipes BARNEY DESMAZERY
Photographs STUART OVENDEN



Creamy barley
& squash risotto,
recipe p32

BARLEY is one of those ingredients that sits in very different food camps but doesn't seem to meet anywhere in the middle. It is cooked by the health conscious and the canny, who know that it's a cheap, nutritious ingredient that can bulk up soups or make a salad into a substantial main meal – and also by chefs who want to encourage their diners to try something different. It certainly doesn't have the everyday ingredient status it deserves.

There are two types of barley available – pot barley and pearl barley. Pot barley is the more nutritious of the two but is less readily available and takes longer to cook. It is less refined than pearl, with only the outer husk removed, which also gives it a nuttier flavour.

Pearl barley has had all the husks removed and is then polished (pearled), resulting in a product that more resembles large grains of rice. For soups, stews and slow-cooked dishes like Scotch broth, the two types are interchangeable. However, pearl barley is the one to use for speedier dishes like risotto, or to be quickly boiled to make a salad.



Creamy barley & squash risotto

SERVES 4 ● PREP 10 MINS ● COOK 55 MINS **Easy** **V** **Low fat** **iron** **2 of 5-a-day**

Risotto usually means rice, but there are advantages to using barley – it's cheaper than risotto rice, you can add all the liquid at once, and it's really hard to overcook. You can swap the squash with whatever you want – chicken, mushrooms, asparagus, broad beans, peas, or shellfish.

1 tbsp butter
1 onion, finely chopped
1 small butternut squash (600-700g), peeled and diced into small chunks
2 garlic cloves, crushed
small glass of white wine
400g pearl barley
1.2l hot vegetable stock
1 tbsp mascarpone
50g Parmesan, grated
Large handful of parsley, chopped

1 Heat the butter in a large shallow saucepan. Add the onion and squash, and cook very gently, stirring occasionally, until the onion is soft and the squash is starting to soften, about 10 mins. Stir in the garlic and cook for 1 min more. Splash in the white wine and boil down. Add the barley, give it a stir and pour in the stock.

2 Gently simmer for 45 mins, stirring occasionally, until all the stock has been absorbed and the barley is tender. Add a little extra stock during cooking if it evaporates too quickly. Turn off the heat and stir through the mascarpone, half the Parmesan and all the parsley, then season. Spoon into bowls and scatter with the remaining Parmesan.

PER SERVING 586 kcal, protein 24g, carbs 93g, fat 11g, sat fat 6g, fibre 6g, sugar 10g, salt 1.1g

Sort-of Scotch broth

SERVES 6-8 ● PREP 15 MINS ● COOK 2 HRS **Easy** **1 of 5-a-day**

1 tbsp vegetable oil, plus a bit extra
1kg lamb neck fillet, shoulder or other fatty stewing lamb, cut into generous chunks

1 onion, chopped
2 carrots, roughly chopped
1 leek, chopped
2 celery sticks, chopped
3 thyme sprigs

1 bay leaf
1 small white cabbage, roughly shredded
300g swede, diced the same size as the carrot
200g pot or pearl barley
2l vegetable stock
Large handful of parsley, chopped

1 Heat oven to 160C/140C fan. Heat the oil in a flameproof casserole dish and brown the lamb – in batches if necessary – then remove to a plate with a slotted spoon. Add a drizzle more oil and tip in the onion, carrots, leek, celery, thyme and bay. Cook for 5 mins until the vegetables start to soften.

2 Stir in the cabbage, swede and barley, then return the meat to the pan. Pour over the stock and season with a little salt and lots of pepper. Bring to a simmer, cover with a lid and cook in the oven for 1½ hrs until the meat and barley are tender and the vegetables are just starting to collapse. Scatter with parsley and ladle into bowls.

PER SERVING (8) 452 kcal, protein 27g, carbs 29g, fat 25g, sat fat 11g, fibre 5g, sugar 8g, salt 0.9g **BF**





This is more
a main course
than a soup!

5 ways with asparagus

Make the most of the asparagus season with these quick suppers, light lunches and new ideas for sides.

Recipes ADAM RUSSELL Photograph STUART OVENDEN

Griddled asparagus with flaked almonds & butter

SERVES 2 • PREP 5 MINS • COOK 6 MINS

Easy V Low fat Folate 5 of 5-a-day Good for you

Cook **200g asparagus spears** in boiling salted water for 2 mins. Drain, then toss with a little **olive oil**. Heat a griddle pan to very hot, place the spears on the griddle and cook for a few mins, turning to get a nice charred effect all over.

Meanwhile, melt a **knob of butter** in a pan. Divide the asparagus between 2 plates, season and top each pile with a drizzle of melted butter and **1 tsp toasted flaked almonds**.

PER SERVING 107 kcals, protein 4g, carbs 3g, fat 9g, sat fat 3g, fibre 2g, sugar 2g, salt 0.1g

Gnocchi with sage, asparagus & peas

SERVES 2 • PREP 5 MINS • COOK 5 MINS

Easy V Low fat Low cal Fibre 2 of 5-a-day

Cook **400g gnocchi** and **150g asparagus tips** in boiling salted water for 3 mins. Add **200g frozen peas** and cook for 1 min more, then drain. Melt a large **knob of butter** in a pan. Sizzle **4 shredded sage leaves**, then stir in gnocchi, veg and a **squeeze of lemon juice**. Season and serve with **grated Parmesan** or vegetarian alternative.

PER SERVING 365 kcals, protein 13g, carbs 68g, fat 4g, sat fat 2g, fibre 9g, sugar 6g, salt 1.6g

Roast asparagus & Jersey Royals with pancetta

SERVES 4 • PREP 5 MINS • COOK 25 MINS

Easy P Low fat Good for you

Heat oven to 220C/200C fan. Place **500g halved Jersey Royal potatoes** in a roasting tin, drizzle with $\frac{1}{2}$ **tbbsp olive oil**, then season. Lay **5 rashers pancetta** over and roast for 15 mins. Stir in **300g asparagus spears** and roast for 10 mins. Add a **squeeze of lemon juice** and a **small bunch chopped mint** to serve.

PER SERVING 161 kcals, protein 6g, carbs 20g, fat 6g, sat fat 2g, fibre 3g, sugar 3g, salt 0.5g



Griddled asparagus with flaked almonds & butter

Asparagus soup

SERVES 2 • PREP 10 MINS • COOK 20 MINS

Easy V Folate 2 of 5-a-day

Reserve tips from **200g asparagus** and chop stalks. Heat $\frac{1}{2}$ **tbbsp olive oil** in a pan, add **1 chopped onion**, $\frac{1}{2}$ **stick chopped celery** and $\frac{1}{2}$ **chopped leek**. Cook for 10 mins until soft. Add stalks and **700ml veg stock**. Cook until stalks are soft, then blitz. Stir in tips and cook for 4 mins. Season and serve with a **dribble of single cream**.

PER SERVING 179 kcals, protein 5g, carbs 11g, fat 13g, sat fat 6g, fibre 5g, sugar 9g, salt 0.9g

Soft-boiled egg with asparagus soldiers

SERVES 2 • PREP 5 MINS • COOK 5 MINS

Easy V Low fat Good for you

Bring a large pan of water to a gentle boil. Place **4 eggs** in the pan and cook for 1 min, then add **100g asparagus tips** and cook for 3 mins more. Remove the eggs to egg cups. Serve the asparagus alongside and season each spear, if you like, before dipping it into the egg.

PER SERVING 164 kcals, protein 14g, carbs 1g, fat 12g, sat fat 3g, fibre 1g, sugar 1g, salt 0.4g **GF**

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Liquid diet

Tap into traditional wisdom to try these delicious drinks that all use local, Middle eastern ingredients with cooling and hydrating benefits.

Photographs ANAS CHERUR

Hibiscus drink
(Karkade)
Recipe, p37

Saffron drink
Recipe, p37

Date drink

SERVES 4

40 Medjool or normal dates, pitted
1l water

Blend dates and water until completely mixed and smooth. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

Why drink it: Dates are rich in vitamins and minerals, and are a great energy booster as well, as they contain natural sugars like glucose, sucrose and fructose. They also help cope with digestion problems.



Cold ginger drink

SERVES 4

500g ginger, sliced thickly
4l water
Sugar or honey to taste

Bring water to a boil, then add ginger. Continue boiling until the ginger has infused into the water. Add sugar or honey based on preferred sweetness.

Why drink it: Ginger, rich in potassium, magnesium, vitamins B6 and vitamins C, strengthens the immune system, boosts blood circulation, and acts as a natural remedy for indigestion, inflammation, migraines, and diarrhea,



Jallab drink

SERVES 4

125g seedless dates
100g raisins
200ml ice water
6 tbsp caramel syrup
2 tbsp rose water
200g of ice cubes
100g pine nuts

1 Blend the dates and raisins with 200ml water until smooth. Add all the ingredients and blend again.
2 Strain and pour the juice into a glass. Add a few pine nuts on top and the crushed ice cubes. Add a few more pine nuts on top as garnish.

Why drink it? Vitamin A, C and D-rich pine nuts are great when combined with cooling ice and rose water.



Arabian nights drink

SERVES 4

20ml date juice (from muddled dates)
150ml fresh pineapple juice
20ml lime juice

FOR THE ORGEAT SYRUP

1l water
2kg fine sugar
2 lemons, sliced
2 cups of fresh almonds, skin removed

1 To make the orgeat syrup, bring water to a boil and add sugar. Reduce heat to simmer, then add the sliced lemon and continue to boil till the lemon slices turn brown. Increase the heat, and once the water is at boiling temperature again, add the almonds and boil for another 5 mins. Pour syrup into a steel pot. Refrigerate for 24 hours before straining.
2 Blitz together the date, pineapple and lime juice in a blender. Add the orgeat syrup and mix well.

Why drink it? Pineapple juice contains an enzyme known as bromelain which has a natural anti-inflammatory effect that aids digestion, and cools down the body.

**Yoghurt date drink**

SERVES 4

250ml date syrup or purée
1l laban

Blend the date syrup and laban until the mixture is smooth. Serve chilled.

Why drink it: Laban is cooling and helps the digestive system.

**Saffron drink**

SERVES 4

3l water
1 tsp saffron
6 cubes of sugar
1 tbs rose water

Boil water and add the saffron, sugar and rose water. Simmer for

5 mins and remove from the heat. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

Why drink it: Saffron is a great source of antioxidants, but is also rich in vitamin A, folic acid and vitamin C. Rose water is not only cooling, but also improves blood circulation.

Lemon, mint and lemongrass drink

SERVES 4

3 stalks of lemongrass
400ml water
120ml fresh lemon juice
80ml sugar syrup
60ml rose water
Mint leaves
Cup of ice cubes

1 Crush two lemongrass stalks and bring to boil with the water for 3-5mins. Allow the lemongrass flavoured water to cool down.
2 Once cool, blend the flavoured water, mint leaves, rose water, sugar syrup, lemon juice and ice cubes until smooth.
4 Garnish with mint and sliced lemongrass stalks.

Why drink it? Mint has a cooling effect on the body as it contains menthol, an active ingredient which has the same effect on nerve cells as something cold would. Mint also has a detoxifying effect, while lemon juice purifies the blood and lowers blood pressure and stress levels.

**Hibiscus drink (Karkade)**

SERVES 4

2-3 cups dried hibiscus flowers (Available at Lulu hypermarkets)
2l room temperature water
1-2 cup sugar
OPTIONAL FLAVOURINGS
1 sprig mint
½ tsp vanilla extract
½ tsp grated fresh ginger root
1 tsp orange flower water
½ cup lemon juice

1 Rinse dried flowers in cool water.
2 Heat the water in a saucepan. Once it begins to boil, add the dried hibiscus flowers and the optional flavourings you prefer

(you can use as many of them as you like). Immediately remove from heat, once boiled, and let the flowers simmer for 10 mins. Pour the water from the pot into a pitcher using a strainer (lined with cheesecloth) to separate the flowers from the water. (Be sure not to pour any of the flower sediment into the pitcher).
3 Refrigerate until chilled.

Why drink it: Hibiscus helps lower body temperature, as well as blood pressure. [CF](#)

Recipes from Anatara Hotels' chefs. www.anatara.com.

Satisfying salads

In the first of a three-part series, we share fresh, light salads that are perfect for summer meals.

Thai beef salad

SERVES 2 • PREP 15 MINS •

COOK 5 MINS **Easy**  **Low fat** **Low cal**

Iron **Folate** **Vit C** **2 of 5-a-day**

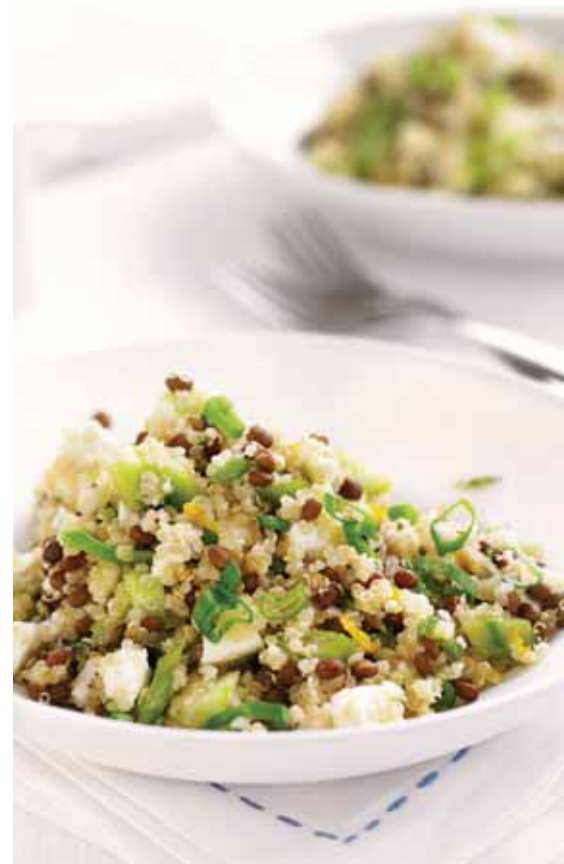
300g rump steak, trimmed of fat
2 tsp groundnut oil
Juice of 1 lime
1 red chilli, deseeded and sliced
(bird's-eye chillies work well)
1 tbsp soft light brown sugar
85g bag baby leaf salad
140g beansprouts
140g red grapes, halved
Steamed rice, to serve (optional)

1 Rub the steak with 1 tsp of the oil and season. Fry in a hot pan for 2-2½ mins each side (depending on thickness) for medium-rare. Transfer to a plate, cover loosely with foil and rest for 5 mins.

2 Make the dressing by mixing the lime juice, chilli, sugar and remaining oil in a bowl. Set aside until the sugar dissolves.

3 Divide the salad leaves, beansprouts and grapes between 2 serving bowls. Thinly slice the steak and add the juices to the dressing. Drizzle this over the salads, toss with the steak and serve immediately with rice, if you like.

PER SERVING 317 kcs, protein 36g, carbs 21g, fat 11g, sat fat 3g, fibre 2g, sugar 19g, salt 0.25g



Quinoa, lentil & feta salad

SERVES 4 • PREP 15 MINS • COOK 15

MINS **Easy**  **Low fat** **Low cal**

Iron **1 of 5-a-day** **Good for you**

200g quinoa

1 tsp olive oil

1 shallot or ½ onion, finely chopped

2 tbsp tarragon, roughly chopped

400g can Puy or green lentils,
drained and rinsed

¼ cucumber, lightly peeled and diced

100g feta, crumbled

6 spring onions, thinly sliced

Zest and juice of 1 orange

1 tbsp vinegar

1 Cook the quinoa in a large pan of boiling water for 10-15 mins until tender, drain well, then set aside to cool.

2 Meanwhile, heat the oil in a small pan, then cook the shallot or onion for a few mins until softened. Add the tarragon, stir well, then remove from the heat.

3 Stir the softened shallot or onion mixture into the cooled quinoa along with the lentils, cucumber, feta, spring onions, orange zest and juice, and vinegar. Toss together well and chill until ready to serve.

PER SERVING 286 kcs, protein 16g, carbs 39g, fat 9g, sat fat 3g, fibre 2g, sugar 6g, salt 1.48g



Marinated aubergine & rocket salad

SERVES 4 • PREP 10 MINS •

COOK 30 MINS **Easy** **V** **Low fat** **Low cal**

2 of 5-a-day Good for you

2 aubergines, cut into small chunks
3 tbsp olive oil
2 tbsp balsamic vinegar
Small handful of sultanas
50g bag rocket

1 Heat oven to 200C/180C fan. Toss the aubergine with 2 tbsp of the olive oil and some seasoning in a large roasting tin and roast for 30 mins until golden and soft.

2 When cooked, toss with the vinegar, sultanas and remaining oil. Scatter over the rocket just before serving. Can be served warm or at room temperature.

PER SERVING 122 kcs, protein 2g, carbs 9g, fat 9g, sat fat 1g, fibre 3g, sugar 9g, salt 0.02g **GF**



A seasonal salad

Make the most of asparagus with this delicious recipe.

Warm salad of asparagus & duck egg

SERVES 6 • PREP 25 MINS • PREP 25 MINS

Easy **V** **Folate** **P**

6 rashers smoked streaky bacon
3 duck eggs (or 5 large hen's eggs)
500g asparagus, about 30 medium spears
50g hazelnuts, toasted and crushed

FOR THE DRESSING

3 tbsp hazelnut oil
2 tbsp rapeseed oil
1 tbsp cider vinegar
2 tsp smooth French mustard

1 Heat grill to High and cook the bacon for 5 mins until crisp, then snip with scissors into pieces. Set aside. Cook the eggs in boiling water for 8 mins (5 mins for hen's eggs), drain and plunge into ice water, to cool as quickly as possible.

2 To make the dressing, whisk all ingredients together with seasoning.

3 Prepare the asparagus by snapping off the base of each spear – it'll break at the tender point. Bring a pan of salted water to the boil, cook the asparagus for about 5 mins, until just tender. Drain, then divide between plates.

4 Put the nuts and bacon into a warm oven. Halve the eggs and season. Add egg halves on the asparagus, sprinkle with nuts and bacon, then drizzle with dressing in a zigzag pattern.

MAKE THIS WITH



The artisanal La Tourangelle hazelnut oil adds a unique, nutty flavour not only to salad dressings, but can be used in a variety of dishes, from pastas, to a dipper for breads. Available at select markets and supermarkets.

Make veg the star

Vegetarian
mains
everyone
will love

You'll make these internationally-inspired meat-free recipes again and again, because they're always a hit. Photographs David Munns & Will Heap

Soft tofu with a
delicious crunchy
coating

Black sesame tofu

SERVES 1 • PREP 10 MINS PLUS

MARINATING • COOK 15 MINS **Easy** 

75g plain tofu

FOR THE MARINADE

2-3 tbsp apple juice

1-2 tbsp shoyu soy sauce

1 small garlic clove, finely chopped

Small piece of fresh root ginger,
peeled and sliced

1 red chilli, deseeded and chopped

75g soba noodles

Splash of toasted sesame oil

25g green beans, sliced lengthways

2 tsp hijiki seaweed (see Tip, left)

Small handful of fresh micro herbs

FOR THE CRUST

1 heaped tsp cornflour

1 tbsp black sesame seeds

1 tbsp white sesame seeds

Pinch of chilli flakes

Sunflower oil, for shallow frying

1 Slice the tofu horizontally, then cut diagonally into triangles. Place in a shallow dish. Mix together the marinade ingredients and pour over the tofu. Leave for at least 1 hr, turning the tofu half-way through so that it marinates evenly.

2 Soak the hijiki seaweed in a bowl of hot water for 20 mins. Drain and set aside. Cook the noodles according to the instructions on the packet. Drain, then stir in the sesame oil to prevent the noodles sticking. You may not need all the cooked noodles. Mix together the cornflour, sesame seeds and chilli flakes. Take the tofu pieces one at a time and dip into the mix so that it sticks to all sides.

3 Shallow fry the tofu in the sunflower oil until crisp. Set aside. Strain the marinade and keep as a dipping sauce. In a wok, heat 1 tsp sunflower oil and stir-fry the green beans. Add 1 tbsp marinade plus the noodles and drained hijiki and stir-fry to heat through. Serve topped with the tofu and micro herbs and use the marinade as a dipping sauce.

TIP Hijiki (also spelt Hiziki) is a sweet-flavoured seaweed extremely rich in iron and calcium. It comes in the form of fine shreds. As an alternative, use Arame.

Vegetable vegan biriyani with carrot salad

SERVES 8 ● PREP 30 MINS ● COOK 40

MINS **Easy** **V** **Low cal** **Fibre** **Iron** **Vit C**

2 of 5-a-day **Good for you**

400g basmati rice
Pinch of saffron threads (optional)
2 tbsp vegetable oil
1 cauliflower, cut into florets
2 potatoes, cut into chunks
100g red lentils
100g French beans, trimmed and cut in half
Handful of curry leaves
2 handfuls of frozen peas
Small bunch of coriander
50g roasted cashew nuts, roughly chopped
poppadoms and naan bread, to serve

FOR THE PASTE
1 large onion, roughly chopped
Large piece of ginger, roughly chopped
5 garlic cloves
2 tsp curry powder
1 tsp ground cumin
2 tbsp vegetable oil
1 small green chilli

FOR THE CARROT SALAD
4 carrots
Pinch of golden caster sugar
Squeeze of lemon juice
Handful of cashew nuts, roughly chopped
Handful of coriander leaves, roughly chopped
Thumb-sized piece of ginger, shredded into matchsticks
1 tsp cumin seeds, toasted

1 Soak the rice for 30 mins, then rinse in several changes of water until it runs clear. Cover with about 1 cm water, add the saffron (if using), cover the pan, bring to the boil, stir once, then turn off the heat. Leave for 10 mins, covered, then stir again and leave to stand, covered.

2 To make the paste, blitz all the ingredients together in a food processor. Heat the oil in a saucepan. Tip in the paste, then add the cauliflower and potatoes. Cook in the paste to colour, then add the lentils and green beans, and cover with about 400ml water. Add the curry leaves, season with salt, cover with a lid and

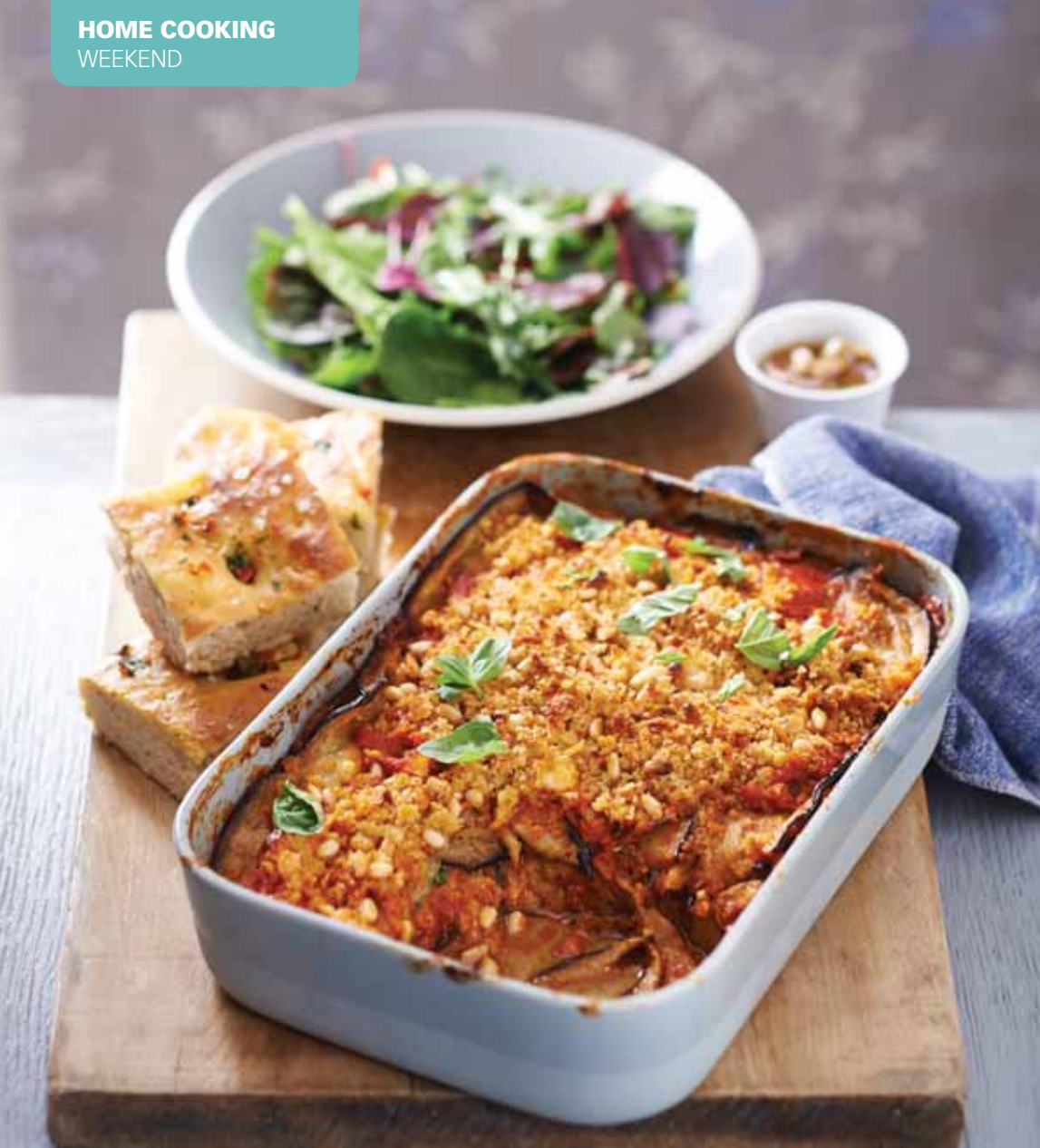
simmer for 20 mins until the lentils and vegetables are tender. Add the peas for the last 2 mins to defrost. Stir the rice through the curry until it is completely mixed and hot, then spoon onto a platter and scatter with the coriander and cashews.

3 For the carrot salad, use a peeler to shave the carrots into ribbons. Sprinkle








with the sugar and dress with the lemon juice, then toss with the other ingredients. Serve the biryani on a large platter for everyone to help themselves, with the carrot salad on the side, poppadoms for any vegans and naan bread for the vegetarians.

PER SERVING 424 kcs, protein 14g, carbs 60g, fat 13g, sat fat 2g, fibre 7g, sugar 9g, salt 0.2g >>





Melanzane parmigiana

SERVES 4-6 ● PREP 30 MINS ●
COOK 1 HR 25 MINS **A little effort**  
    

2 tbsp olive oil, plus extra for brushing
3 garlic cloves, crushed
3 thyme sprigs
8 large sage leaves, finely chopped
4 x 400g cans chopped tomatoes
3 tbsp vinegar
3 tbsp golden caster or granulated sugar
6 large aubergines, sliced lengthways as thinly as you can
100g vegetarian-style Parmesan, finely grated
85g white breadcrumbs
50g pine nuts

2 x 125g balls vegetarian-style mozzarella, torn into small chunks
Handful of basil leaves

1 Heat the oil in a large frying pan (or wide saucepan), add the garlic, thyme and sage, and cook gently for a few mins. Tip in the tomatoes, vinegar and sugar, and gently simmer for 20-25 mins until thickened a little.
2 Meanwhile, heat a griddle (or frying) pan. Brush the aubergine slices on both sides with olive oil, then griddle in batches. You want each slice softened and slightly charred, so don't have the heat too high or the aubergine will char before softening. Remove to a plate as you go.
3 In a large baking dish, spread a little of the tomato sauce over the base. Mix 25g of the Parmesan with the

breadcrumbs and pine nuts, and set aside. Top the sauce with a layer or two of aubergine slices, then season well. Spoon over a bit more sauce, then scatter over some mozzarella, Parmesan and basil leaves. Repeat, layering up – and finish with the last of the tomato sauce. Scatter over the cheesy breadcrumbs and chill for up to 24 hrs, or bake straight away.
4 Heat oven to 200C/180C fan. Bake for 30-40 mins until the top is crisp and golden, and the tomato sauce bubbling. Rest for 10 mins, then scatter with basil leaves and serve with salad and focaccia (recipes below).

PER SERVING (6) 481 kcals, protein 24g, carbs 37g, fat 27g, sat fat 11g, fibre 17g, sugar 25g, salt 1.3g

Serve with

Green salad with olive dressing

SERVES 6 ● PREP 15 MINS ●
NO COOK **Easy**   **Low fat**


Finely chop **1 small red onion** and **50g green olives**. Whisk **2 tbsp olive oil**, **2 tbsp vinegar** and **2 tsp golden caster sugar**, then stir in the olives and onion. Season. Tip **6 big handfuls mixed green leaves** into a bowl – pick a bag with different flavours and textures; a bit of crunch works well with the Melanzane parmigiana. Drizzle the olive dressing over and toss gently to coat.

PER SERVING 66 kcals, protein 1g, carbs 3g, fat 5g, sat fat 1g, fibre 1g, sugar 3g, salt 0.3g

Garlic chilli focaccia

SERVES 6 ● PREP 15 MINS ● COOK 10-15 MINS **Easy**  

Finely chop **1 small bunch flat-leaf parsley** and **1 big red chilli** (seeds in or out, up to you), crush **4 garlic cloves** and mash into **100g softened butter**. Season well and spread over **1 large focaccia loaf**. Bake on baking sheets at 200C/180C fan for 10-15 mins until hot and crisping.

PER SERVING 253 kcals, protein 4g, carbs 20g, fat 18g, sat fat 9g, fibre 2g, sugar 2g, salt 0.8g 



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Executives and residents in the vicinity can visit the restaurant to try the 40-minute express lunch – ideal for business lunch meetings – which includes salads from the buffet, one main course and water or coffee. For a more gourmet experience, the wine dinner, held every second

Tuesday of the month, offers a lavish three- or five-course dinner option.

Not just a weekday destination, The Cavendish is a great option to indulge in the Family brunch on a Friday. Commence with a selection of salads, soups, shellfish and smoked fish, before trying breakfast items that await diners at the live egg station. For a more hearty treat, you could order mains such as Shepherd's pie, which is made-to-order, or, sweeten your palate with pancakes and waffles cooked at the live stations. An assortment of cheese, pastries and desserts are also available. Children can head to the special kids zone to watch movies, play games and tuck into bites from the buffet.



RECIPE



Pan fried foie gras with caramelised apricots and amorette biscuits

SERVES 4 🍷

4 whole fresh apricots
30ml olive oil
50g butter
20g sugar
1 vanilla pod
30ml apricot liquor
100ml chicken stock
40g raisins (golden)
40ml sweet wine

400g foie gras
5g salt
3g pepper
160ml beef stock, reduced to half
40g amorette biscuits
2 sprigs of thyme

1 To make the caramelised apricots, take four apricots, split in half around the centre line, and remove the seed from the middle. Heat a large frying pan with a little olive oil, and place the apricots in the pan flesh side down. Add a couple of knobs of diced butter to the pan, and when it starts to foam, add the sugar. Remove the seeds from the vanilla pod and add to the apricots along with the pod for extra flavour. Once the apricot flesh is caramelised (golden brown) turn onto the skin side and gently cook until tender. Remove from the pan and set aside.
2 Place the pan back onto the heat and deglaze with the apricot liquor. Reduce by half. Add chicken stock and reduce down again until a thick consistency is formed, then pour the glaze over

the apricots and refrigerate until cool.

3 Heat the sweet wine in a saucepan until it starts to boil, remove from the heat, add the golden raisins to the liquor and allow to soak for a couple of hours. Pass the raisins through a fine strainer and set aside to cool, take the sweet wine add it back into a sauce pan, return to the heat and reduce by $\frac{3}{4}$ or until it reaches a thick glazed consistency.

4 To serve, heat a small frying pan, place two pieces of seasoned foie gras in the pan and caramelise all sides. Remove from the pan onto a tray and place under the top grill for 1 min to finish cooking. Warm two pieces of apricot halves under the grill on a small tray, and then place on the centre of the plate, and drizzle the sweet wine reduction and beef stock reduction around the plate. When the foie gras is cooked, place on top of the apricot halves and finish with crushed amorette biscuits and thyme.

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Kitchen notes

Nutrition advice,
expert cooking tips
and product picks
for your pantry.

Reader tip of the month



Tupperware and other plastic containers retain odours over time. To get rid of this odour and trapped food particles, simply scrub the containers with salt.

- Zahra SA



Got a great tip you want to share?

Get in touch with us on [facebook.com/bbcgoodfoodme](https://www.facebook.com/bbcgoodfoodme)

Did you know?

Bell peppers have a gender as well! Those with four bumps on the bottom are female, while bell peppers with three bumps are male. Female peppers usually contain more seeds and are best when eaten raw, as they are sweeter, whereas the male peppers have fewer seeds, and are great for cooking.



SMART FOOD SWAPS



Morning solutions

Nestlé has revamped its breakfast cereal formulae to provide more nutritional benefits in each bowl. Nesquik, Chocapic and Honey Cheerios now have only 9g of sugar per 30g serving, contain less than 135ml of sodium, are made with more whole grains and are fortified with Vitamin D. The cereals are also a great source of calcium. Nestlé has also revealed that a 30g serving of Nesquik cereal with 125ml semi skimmed milk, has less sugar than a pot of fruit yoghurt or a banana, which makes it a great breakfast option for kids and adults. Not that it could replace a fresh, home-cooked breakfast, but it's good to know that packaged cereals for busy mornings are that little bit healthier! The range is available at all leading supermarkets.

Look what we found!

3 great new products for your kitchen



Why use regular balsamic vinegar when you can give salads a sweet kick with this mango balsamic vinegar? Dhs21 for 100ml, at Crescendo Dubai.



Make breakfasts tastier with these Freedom foods crispy rice flakes which are naturally flavoured with apple juice, and free from gluten, wheat, nuts, soy, dairy, and eggs. Dhs21 at Milk and Honey stores.



Prevent soggy sandwiches with these Keep Leaf reusable and machine-washable baggies. With a cotton exterior and a waterproof liner, the bag is an eco alternative to sandwich bags and wraps. Dhs23 at The Change Initiative.

Health update> June 11-17 marks **International Men's Health week**, so make sure the man in your life follows a healthy diet and exercise regime, to maintain fitness and prevent ageing-related health conditions. Include potassium-rich bananas in the diet as they assist metabolism, aid the immune system and are a great pre-workout snack too. Fatty fish, Brazil nuts, soybean, dark leafy vegetables, wholegrain pasta and quinoa are also important, as they are vitamin- and antioxidant-rich, promote heart-health and protect against prostate cancer.



Fun stuff for
Father's Day
16 June



Salmon, dill and cream cheese frittata

SERVES 4 • PREP 15 MINS • COOK 45 MINS

12 eggs
250ml whipping cream
2 tbsp dill, chopped, plus 8 twigs to garnish
2 tbsp chives, chopped
240g smoked salmon
160g cream cheese
Zest from 1 lemon
100g mixed greens (arugula, frisee)
Juice of 1 lemon
2 tbsp olive oil
Salt and freshly cracked pepper to taste
Mixed salad leaves, to serve

- 1 Preheat the oven to 175C.
- 2 Lightly beat the eggs with cream, dill and chives. Season with salt and freshly cracked pepper.
- 3 Dice the smoked salmon in 1cm pieces and add to the egg mixture, reserve four slices for garnish.
- 4 Dice the cream cheese in 1cm pieces and add half to the egg mixture.
- 5 Pour the mixture into a buttered 24cm round pan and bake in the oven for about 35-40 mins, until lightly browned and set.
- 6 Remove from the oven, sprinkle the remaining cream cheese and lemon zest on top, then allow to cool for 10 mins before removing from the pan.
- 7 Cut the frittata in wedges, add the salmon slices, and garnish with dill sprigs. Serve with a green salad on the side.

Daddy's Day brunch

We got Thomas Rebler, Culinary director of JW Marriott Marquis, to bring his adorable nine-year old daughter Jessica into the kitchen with him, to cook up a simple, healthy Father's Day feast together. Photographs ANAS CHERUR

Photographs ANAS CHERUR | Text & Styling NICOLA MONTEATH

Blueberry and banana brioche French toast

SERVES 4 • PREP 15 MINS • COOK 25 MINS

80ml milk

4 eggs

2 tbsp brown sugar

Pinch of cinnamon powder

8 thick slices of brioche (available in bakeries)

120g butter

160ml maple syrup

125g blueberries

2 bananas, peeled and sliced diagonally

2 tbsp icing sugar

20 mint leaves

1 Preheat oven to 160C.

2 Mix the milk, egg, brown sugar and cinnamon in a bowl (see step A). Then transfer into a shallow plate.

3 Soak the bread in the egg mixture for about 30 seconds on each side, keep aside (step B).

4 Heat half of the butter in a pan and once the butter is melted, cook 4 slices of French toast for about 3 mins on each side, on medium heat, to golden brown. Add butter as needed. Cook the second batch and keep the cooked slices warm in the oven.

5 Heat the syrup in a sauce pan, bring to a boil, then add the blueberries and reduce the heat. Simmer for 1 min, then add the banana slices and remove from the heat. Let steep for 5 mins.

6 Arrange the French toast, berries and bananas in layers, and drizzle with syrup (step C). Finish with icing sugar and the mint leaves on top. >>






Raspberry, yoghurt and organic granola parfait

SERVES 4 • PREP 20 MINS • NO COOK

125g raspberries
2 tbsp icing sugar
200ml creamy all-natural, low-fat yoghurt
80g organic granola
60ml honey or agave syrup
12 mint leaves

- 1** To make the raspberry sauce, crush half of raspberries and combine with the icing sugar. Let it stand for about 5 mins (step A).
- 2** Line up a selection of glasses to build the parfait in and spoon 2 tbsp of yoghurt into each glass.
- 3** Drizzle some honey over (step B), and add 2 tbsp of granola on top.
- 4** Then add 2 tbsp of the berries and top with honey and raspberry syrup. Finish with mint leaves (step C). 

“I’m really excited to be cooking with dad in his restaurant. I love cooking and baking at home, and have learnt a lot of recipes from him, like Mookies – a combination of muffins and cookies!”

– Jessica Rebler



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Learn to: Make Scotch eggs



The traditional Scotch egg has made a comeback and, with a few of Barney Desmazery's updated tricks, it's lighter and crispier, too. Photographs DAVID MUNNS



1 Divide the sausage meat mixture into 4 equal balls. Place a ball onto a sheet of cling film and cover the top, leaving enough space to flatten the sausagemeat.



2 Using your hands, or a rolling pin, squash the sausagemeat as flat as possible. Try to keep the meat in a neat oval shape.



3 Unwrap the top of the sausagemeat and place a floured egg in the centre. Use the cling film to lift up the sausagemeat and wrap it around the egg. Seal the meat around the egg with your hands until it's completely encased.



4 Heat the oil in a wide pan. It will be hot enough when breadcrumbs sizzle as soon as they are dropped in and turn brown within about 10 seconds.



5 Using a frying basket or a slotted spoon, carefully submerge the eggs in the hot oil. Turn up the heat, as the temperature of the oil will drop when the eggs go in – you want to maintain a constant sizzle.



6 The eggs are ready when they are a deep golden brown all over and the breadcrumbs are really crisp. Drain on kitchen paper, leave to cool a little, then halve and serve. Best eaten warm. Can be made up to 1 day ahead.

Barney's Scotch eggs

MAKES 4 ● PREP 20 MINS ● COOK 20 MINS

Easy    Calcium

The chef's trick of rolling out a thinner layer of sausage mix means that the eggs keep a neater 'egg' shape and have a better proportion of egg to meat.


5 large eggs**300g good-quality sausages, skinned****1 tsp black peppercorns, crushed****140g cooked ham, shredded****25g sage, apple & onion stuffing mix****1 tsp each chopped sage, thyme and parsley****100g plain flour, seasoned,****plus extra for dusting****100g dried breadcrumbs****Sunflower oil, for frying****Piccalilli, to serve**

1 Bring a pan of salted water to a rapid boil, then lower 4 of the eggs into the pan and simmer for 7 mins 30 secs exactly. Scoop out and place in a bowl of iced water, cracking the shells a little (this makes them easier to peel later). Leave them to cool completely, then peel and set aside. *Can be boiled the day before.*

2 Put the sausagemeat, pepper, ham, stuffing and herbs in a small bowl, mix to combine, then divide into 4 equal balls. Squash one of the balls between a piece of cling film until it's as flat as possible (Step 1-2). One at a time, lightly flour each cooked egg, then use the cling film to help roll the sausagemeat around the egg to completely encase (Step 3). Repeat with the remaining sausageballs and eggs.

3 Beat the remaining egg and put on a plate. Put the flour and breadcrumbs on 2 separate plates. Roll the encased eggs in the flour, then the beaten egg and finally the breadcrumbs. *Can be prepared up to a day in advance.*

4 To cook the eggs, heat 5cm of the oil in a wide saucepan or wok until it reaches 160C on a cooking thermometer or until a few breadcrumbs turn golden after 10 secs in the oil (Step 4). Depending on the size of your pan, lower as many eggs as you can into the oil (Step 5), and cook for 8-10 mins until golden and crispy (Step 6). Drain on kitchen paper, leave to cool a little, then serve halved with some piccalilli.

PER EGG 785 kcals, protein 35g, carbs 43g, fat 52g, sat fat 13g, fibre 2g, sugar 3g, salt 3.8g 





Fishful thinking

www.siblou.com



Shrimps Paella

Preparation time: 10 minutes **Cooking time:** 30 minutes

Serves 1 person

Ingredients

- 100g of Siblou Cooked Shrimps
- 18g of sweet green peppers
- 18g of sweet red peppers
- 10g of frozen green peas
- 25g of red onions
- 1/2 tsp of olive oil
- a pinch of table salt
- 45g of american rice
- 1 tsp of turmeric powder
- 2 tsp of fish powder
- 1/2 tsp saffron

Preparation:

Shrimp marination:

1. Marinate the thawed cooked shrimps in the olive oil, table salt, and turmeric powder one hour in advance.
2. Grill the cooked shrimps for about 1 to 2 minutes on both sides. Do not overcook.

Paella Rice:

1. Chop the onions, red pepper, and green pepper into small cubes.
2. Make fish stock from fish powder and 1 cup of water.
3. Heat some olive oil in a pot, and stir fry the onion, red pepper, and green pepper for one minute.
4. Add the fish stock, saffron, raw American rice and green peas consecutively and stir.
5. Put a lid on the pot and cook the rice for about 15 minutes in low-medium heat until well cooked.

When the rice is done serve it with the grilled shrimps and the Paella sauce* as shown in the picture.

For more delicious recipes visit www.siblou.com

Nutrition Facts:

Serving size: 1 plate

Amount per serving

Calories.....	318 Cal
Total Fat.....	4 g
Cholesterol.....	152 mg
Total Carbohydrates.....	43 g
Dietary Fiber.....	2 g
Sugars.....	3 g
Protein	25 g

*Paella sauce

Preparation time: 5 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 tsp of fish powder
- a pinch of saffron
- 1/2 tsp turmeric powder
- a pinch of table salt
- 1 tsp of low fat cream
- 1/2 tsp of flour

Preparation:

In a sauce pan add ½ a cup of water and bring it to boil. Next add the fish powder, saffron, turmeric powder, and salt.

Add flour to thicken the sauce and stir. Turn the heat off. Finally add low fat cream. Serve aside the paella dish.



All the goodness of the sea...



James Martin's KITCHEN A spoonful of sunshine

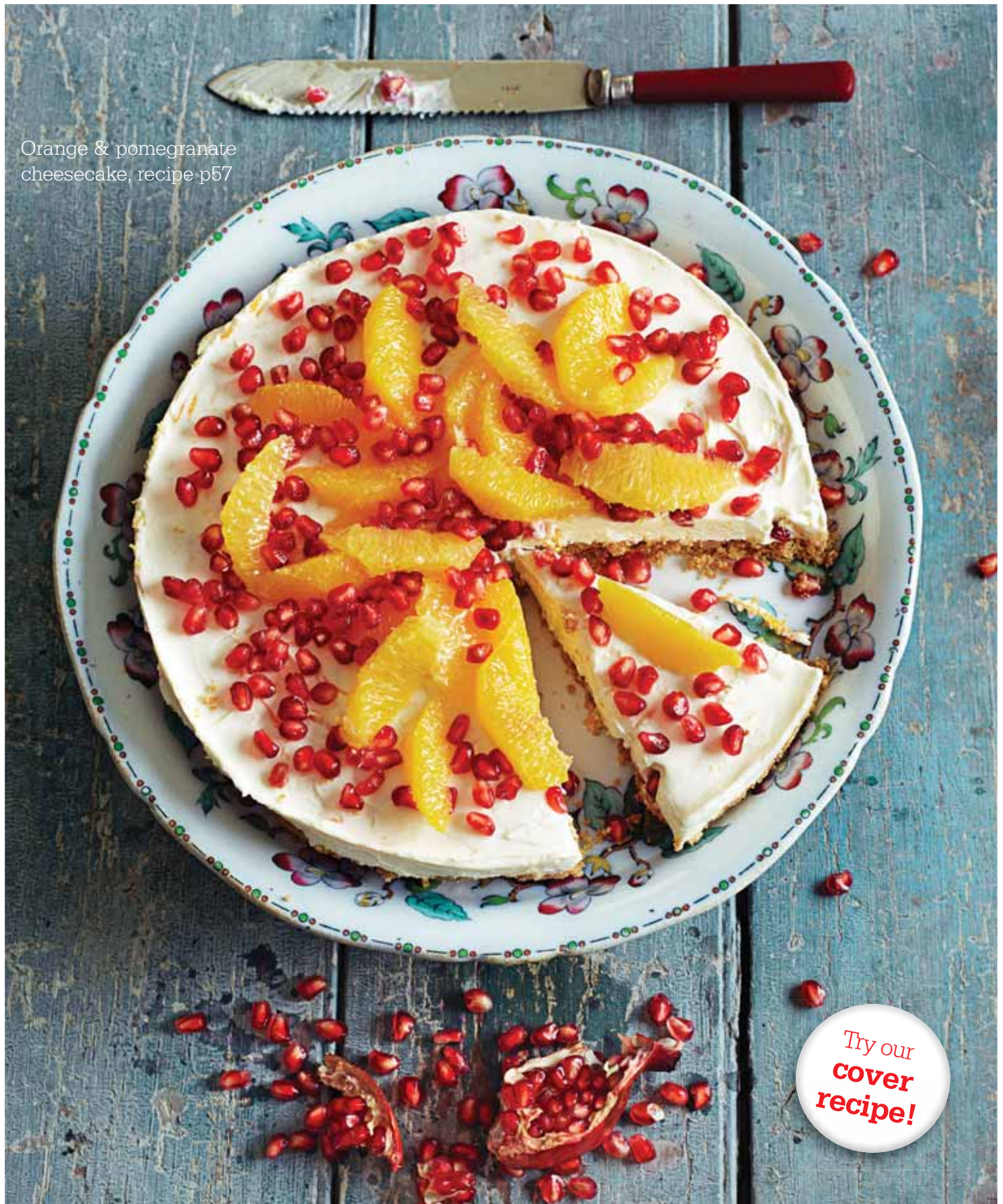


You don't have to enjoy exotic fruit desserts only in restaurants – these sweet treats are easy to create at home, as BBC chef James Martin shows us. Photographs JONATHAN KENNEDY



Passion fruit soufflés
with passion fruit sauce,
recipe p57

Orange & pomegranate
cheesecake, recipe p57



Try our
**cover
recipe!**



6 *I love to create desserts with sharp, refreshing oranges and lemons, and jewel-like pomegranates and passion fruits – they add such a zing of colour and flavour.*
- James Martin

School days citrus pudding

SERVES 4 • PREP 20 MINS •

COOK 40 MINS **Easy** 

50g butter, softened, plus extra for greasing
200g caster sugar
Zest of 2 lemons or 2 limes or 1 grapefruit
100ml lemon, lime or grapefruit juice, or a mixture
3 large eggs, separated
50g plain flour
250ml milk
icing sugar, for dusting (optional)

1 Heat oven to 180C/160C fan. Grease a medium-sized oval baking dish (I used 22 x 18cm) with butter. Combine the butter, caster sugar and zest in a food processor and whizz until the mixture is pale. Add the citrus juice, egg yolks, flour and milk, and whizz until well mixed – it may look a little curdled. Scrape into a bowl. Boil water in the kettle.

2 In a large, clean bowl, whisk the egg whites until firm but not stiff, then gently fold into the zesty mixture. Scrape into the baking dish and put in a roasting tin half-filled with hot water from the kettle. Bake for 35-40 mins until the top is lightly browned and set, but the pudding is still soft-ish underneath. Serve dusted with icing sugar, if you like.

PER SERVING 432 kcals, protein 8g, carbs 61g, fat 17g, sat fat 9g, fibre 1g, sugar 53g, salt 0.4g



Passion fruit soufflés with passion fruit sauce

SERVES 4 • PREP 15 MINS •

COOK 15 MINS **A little effort** 

Knob of butter, plus extra for greasing
75g caster sugar, plus extra for dusting
4 medium egg whites
6 ripe passion fruits, halved
150ml ready-made custard

1 Heat oven to 180C/160C fan. Put a baking tray on the top shelf to heat up. Grease 4 x 150ml ramekins with butter and dust the insides with caster sugar to coat.

2 Whisk the egg whites in a bowl until stiff. Add 1 tbsp of the sugar and whisk for 30 secs more until thick and glossy. In a separate bowl, scoop the pulp from 1 passion fruit into the custard, then fold in the whisked egg white. Spoon the mixture into the prepared ramekins and put on the hot baking tray. Bake for 15 mins until risen and golden on top.

3 While the soufflés are cooking, make the sauce. Scoop the remaining passion fruit pulp into a saucepan, add the remaining sugar and simmer gently for 5 mins. Finally add a knob of butter and stir until melted. Pass through a sieve and serve in a jug with the hot soufflés as soon as they come out of the oven. Let your guests break a hole in the centre of their soufflé, then pour in the sauce.

PER SERVING 226 kcals, protein 7g, carbs 29g, fat 8g, sat fat 3g, fibre 2g, sugar 27g, salt 0.3g



Orange & pomegranate cheesecake

CUTS INTO 8-10 SLICES • PREP 20 MINS


PLUS CHILLING • NO COOK **Easy** 

250g digestive biscuits
100g butter, melted
600g full-fat cream cheese
Zest of 3 oranges – cut out the segments for the decoration
3 tbsp milk
100g icing sugar
150ml double cream
Seeds of 1 pomegranate, or 110g tub pomegranate seeds

1 Crush the biscuits roughly – either put them in a plastic food bag and crush with a rolling pin, or whizz them in a food processor to chunky crumbs. Transfer to a bowl, mix in the melted butter and tip into a 23cm springform tin. Using your fingers or the back of a spoon, press the biscuit mixture evenly to form the base. Chill until set, about 30 mins.

2 Put the soft cheese, zest, milk and icing sugar into a bowl and blend using an electric mixer until smooth. Add the cream and whisk until the mixture is the consistency of thick custard. Pour the filling over the biscuit base and spread evenly. Return to the fridge and chill until set, at least 4 hrs or overnight.

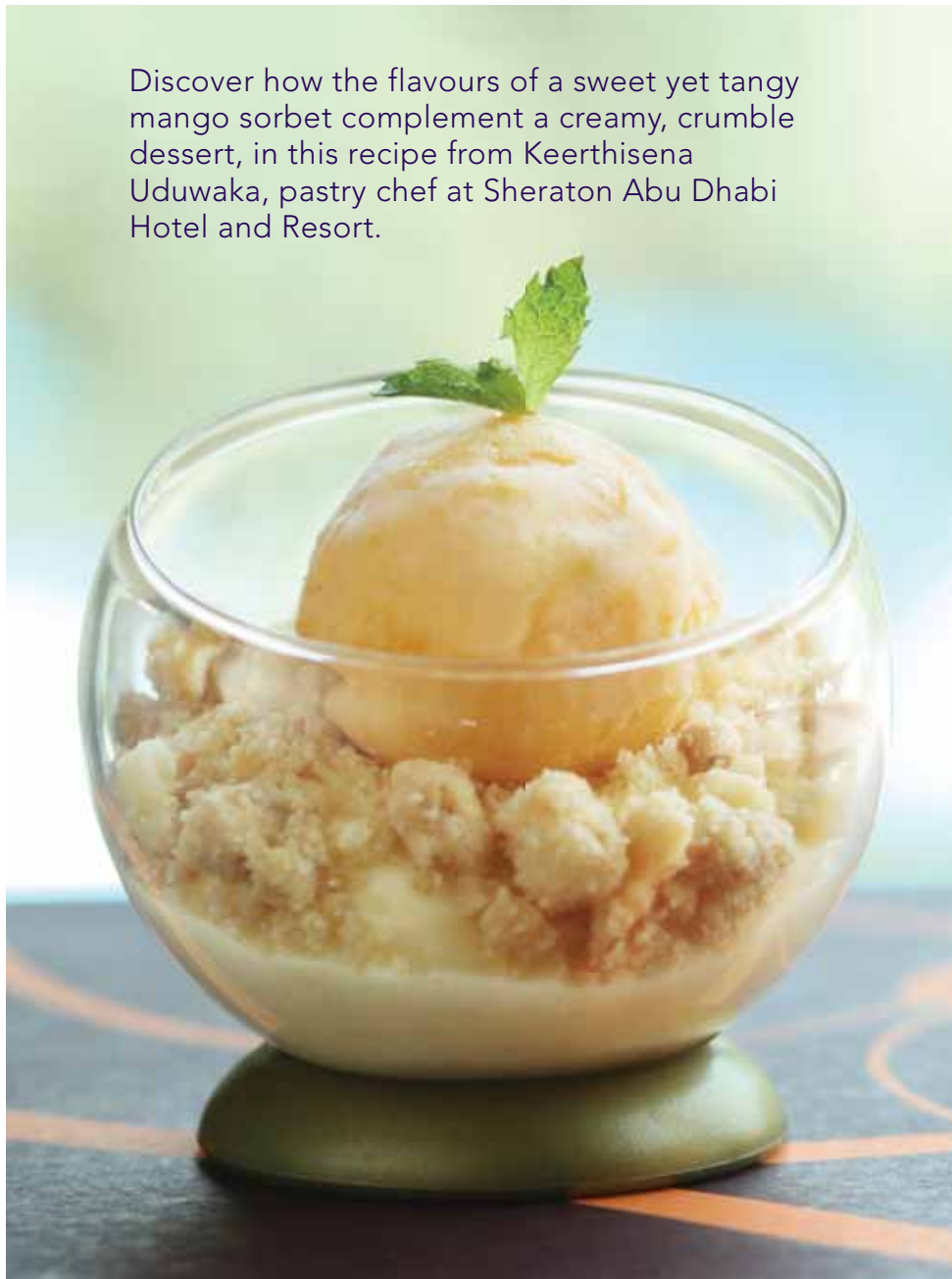
3 To serve, top with the orange segments and scatter over the pomegranate seeds.

PER SLICE (10) 529 kcals, protein 7g, carbs 31g, fat 40g, sat fat 25g, fibre 1g, sugar 19g, salt 1.0g 

The London Dairy dessert series

#6 Tropical taste

Discover how the flavours of a sweet yet tangy mango sorbet complement a creamy, crumble dessert, in this recipe from Keerthisena Uduwaka, pastry chef at Sheraton Abu Dhabi Hotel and Resort.



FOR THE CUSTARD

1l milk
1 vanilla pod
150g sugar
8 each egg yolk
80g corn flour

FOR THE CREAM CHEESE MIXTURE

Zest of 1 lemon
200g double cream, whipped to a soft peak
200g cream cheese
80g custard
70g caramel nuts
4 each mint leaves for garnishing

1 Prepare the caramel by bringing to the boil the sugar and water for 10 mins until it becomes golden brown. Remove from the heat and add the nuts to the caramel, keep aside. Once cooled to room temperature, chop roughly.

2 Mix all the crumble ingredients together and bake for 15 mins at 170C. Set aside.

3 To make the custard, slowly bring the milk to boil with the vanilla pod. Mix the egg yolk and sugar in a pan until the mixture becomes white. Then add the corn flour and mix for 1 min. Pour the boiling milk on top of the mixture and mix well to prevent the eggs from scrambling. Cook the mixture slowly for another 10 mins until it reaches a thick consistency. Cool at room temperature for 20 mins.

4 Combine together the lemon zest, cream cheese, custard and caramel nuts, and then add the whipped cream. Mix well and place into a piping bag.

5 Pipe the mixture into a bowl or glass and cover with crumble. Add a scoop of the mango sorbet on top and garnish with a mint leaf.

Caramel and mixed nuts cream cheese crumble

SERVES 4

FOR THE CARAMEL

80g sugar
50ml water

60g mixed nuts (almonds, pecan, pistachio, cashew nuts)

FOR THE CRUMBLE

50g sugar
50g butter
20g almond powder
40g flour

Next month,
look out for the recipe with
Strawberry Yoghurt ice cream

MEET THE CHEF



Sri Lankan national Keerthisena Uduwaka has had over 19 years of experience as a pastry chef. Keerthisena grew up in Colombo, Sri Lanka, and joined a catering college at the age of 18, to pursue his dream of becoming a pastry chef. Since then, he has worked in leading hotels in Sri Lanka and the Middle East, including the Crowne Plaza Dubai, Le Meridien in Kuwait, and the Intercontinental hotel in Al Ain, before taking on his position as pastry chef, over two years ago, at Sheraton Abu Dhabi Hotel and Resort.

CHEF'S TIP:

"When using vanilla pods, split in half lengthwise and scrape the inside in order to get as much vanilla flavor as possible. Then use the pod and the seeds from inside when boiling with milk."

Two other ways to enjoy London Dairy's Mango Sorbet:



Serve a scoop on a bed of crushed pistachio.



Eat with a bowl of macerated berries.



Sheraton Abu Dhabi Hotel and Resort



To see a step-by-step video for this recipe, visit youtube.com/bbcgoodfoodme or facebook.com/LondonDairy, or you could simply scan this QR code with your smartphone.



MANGO SORBET

A tangy, sweet and smooth frozen mango treat.





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IN THIS SECTION

- * Gorgeous getaways for gastronomes , **P74** * Discover London's diverse culinary offerings, **P78**
- * The ultimate safari-meets-gourmet experience in Kenya **P83** * A quick foodie guide to Singapore and Tokyo, **P84**



Eat smart!

Can what you eat truly affect your brain power? Experts seem to think so. Sudeshna Ghosh finds out more.

If you find yourself zoning out in meetings, or forgetting where you kept your car keys, or leaving your mobile in the fridge one time too many, it could be what you're eating that is to blame. Research has shown that diet has an important influence on everyday brain skills, as well as long-term brain function, with the right foods helping to prevent Alzheimers and dementia. "Nutrition and hydration are part of a foundation of good cognitive health. Just as the body needs fuel, so does the brain," says dietitian Shiren Janus. "A diet based on fruits, vegetables, whole grains, 'healthy' fats (such as olive oil, avacados, nuts, fish) and lean protein will not only provide lots of health benefits, but also improve memory and concentration."

The Radisson Blu group of hotels recently introduced a new concept called 'Brain food' as part of their Experience Meetings initiative (for meetings and conferences at their hotels), with the objective of serving a scientifically designed menu that will help keep blood sugar levels stable and provide optimum cerebral nutrition, resulting in a high degree of brain activity and reactivity. According to Chef Uwe Micheel, Director of Kitchens Radisson Blu Hotel Dubai Deira Creek, "eating the right nutrients, at the right time, improves our ability to learn and concentrate. The concept came about with the goal of serving food that keeps blood sugar levels stable and supplies optimal nutrition for the brain."

Here are some of the key ingredients that the menu focuses on, that you could also incorporate into your diet to reap the brain-boosting benefits of:

FATTY FISH "Fish such as salmon are a good source of omega-3 fatty acids, which are essential components of brain cell membranes and important for the transfer of brain impulses. Omega-3 fatty acids also have a part to play in the repair and formation of new brain cells, in addition to protecting the brain from natural aging processes," says Uwe. Shiren adds, "While large-scale studies are required to establish the exact role of fish in memory and other brain functions, but pink salmon is a fatty fish high in protein and omega-3 fatty acids or more specifically high in DHA (docosahexaenoic acid) content, and research has shown that DHA can prevent the onset of Alzheimer's."

WHOLEGRAIN FOODS "Most whole grains are rich in B-complex vitamins that promote brain health by protecting nerve tissue against oxidation. B-group vitamins and folic acid also help by enhancing memory and preventing stroke by reducing the harmful high levels of homocysteine in the body," says Shiren. Grains such as dark rye bread, wholegrain pasta, brown rice, and muesli

are good sources of B vitamins as well as folic acid and thiamine. "Brain cells operate better with a consistent supply of energy, which these foods provide," adds Uwe. According to nutritionist and naturopathic therapist Kay Vosloo, "it is very important to stick to whole grains with a low GI value, as this will steady the blood sugar, thereby keeping you mentally alert during the day."

AVOCADOS Loaded with healthy monounsaturated fats, which are known to increase circulation and blood flow to the brain – which means lower blood pressure and more oxygen to the brain – avocados provide the brain with better working conditions. "Hypertension is associated with a decline in brain function, so eating avocados can boost brain health by aiding in lowering blood pressure," says Shiren.

BLUEBERRIES This 'superfruit' is rich in anthocyanines – an extremely powerful group of antioxidants that help to protect the body and brain from harmful substances. "Berries contain a rich bounty of antioxidants that can combat the free radicals that cause damage to the brain's healthy cells. They have potential benefits that can help ward off brain diseases such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's as well as decrease the chances of dementia, which can be caused by oxidative stress," explains Shiren. Uwe adds, "Blueberries also sharpen eyesight, which is an important part of how the brain gathers information."

MILK Rich in protein (whey and casein), vitamin B6, vitamin B12, calcium, magnesium and potassium – all of which are necessary for improving memory and cognitive functions – milk is a must, Shiren says. "Additionally, the whey protein is a mixture of alpha-lactalbumin, beta-lactoglobulin and serum albumin. Studies show that dietary protein rich in alpha-lactalbumin improves cognitive performance in stress-vulnerable people by increasing brain serotonin activity levels," she adds.

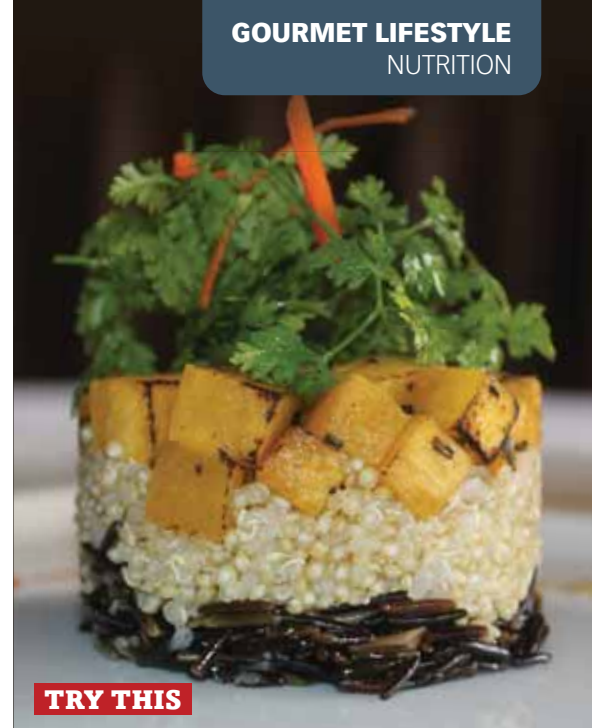
EGG YOLKS "Acetylcholine is a substance found in large quantities in egg yolks, and research has shown that acetylcholine may be involved in increasing concentration levels, elevating the stress threshold and reducing reaction times," says Uwe.

NUTS Nuts like walnuts and almonds contain high quantities of protein, omega-3 fatty acids, and vitamins E and B6, all of which benefit the nervous system, including the brain function. Shiren says, "The nutrients in nuts can also ward off mental disease such as depression." Kay adds, "Nuts and seeds are good sources of vitamin E which is great for intellect, reasoning and perception."

TEA "Hundreds of years ago, tea was used as medicine and modern research confirms that tea has a lot of important functions for our system," says Uwe. Shiren suggests drinking green tea in particular, as "it contains polyphenols, powerful antioxidants that protect against free radicals that can damage brain cells. Among other benefits, regular consumption of green tea may enhance memory and mental alertness and slow brain ageing."

Aside from the actual content of your diet, when and how you eat also has an impact on the brain's performance. "You want to eat breakfast like a king so that this fuels your body and brain for the day. Your dinner meal should be the smaller and lighter meal of the day, allowing your body the ability to slow down before sleeping. You need a good night's sleep to rest the brain so that it is ready for the next day, and you will not have a restful, solid sleep if your body is still trying to digest a large meal," says Kay. "It is also important to always eat slowly and chew well in order to allow your body to release enough enzymes to break down the food. If your body doesn't break down the food, then you will struggle to absorb and assimilate the nutrients which are needed to fuel the brain."

TRIED & TESTED We sampled the Brain Food menu over a two-day period to see if it really helped us get smarter! While it is hard to tangibly measure the effects of such a diet in such a short period of time, the food was filling, yet light and delicious, and seemed to have a positive effect on productivity. Based on the six principles of including lots of fish, wholegrain products, fruit and vegetables; using primarily fresh, locally sourced ingredients; minimal processing; less meat and a maximum ten per cent fat content; natural sweeteners and no more than ten per cent added sugar; and a focus on taste and satisfying the senses, the menu is varied and creative. The breakfast menu for a typical day includes muesli with honey and apple; seasonal fruits with cottage cheese and celery and walnuts; cereal bar; smoked salmon and ricotta sandwich in rye bread; and grapefruit juice, while lunch could consist of asparagus soup; quinoa and wild rice with roasted pumpkin; poached chicken breast with rosemary juice; and fruit salad. Most importantly, it was educational – whether it's a simple snack of cottage cheese with fruit and nuts, or a quinoa salad, they are all easy to prepare dishes, which are proven to be good for you.



TRY THIS

Roasted pumpkin salad with quinoa and wild rice

SERVES 6

3 cups of pumpkin, peeled and cut into 1-inch cubes

12 shallots, peeled and chopped

Extra-virgin olive oil

Sea salt

1 sprig of rosemary, chopped

1 tbsp sunflower seeds

3 tbsp olive oil

2 tbsp lemon juice

¼ tsp sea salt

1 tbsp honey

2 tbsp warm water

1 cup wild rice, cooked

1 cup quinoa, cooked

1 Preheat oven to 180C.

2 Toss the pumpkin and shallots in olive oil along and salt to taste, sprinkle with rosemary and lay on baking tray. Oven roast for 45 min to an hour, until browned and tender, tossing a couple of times along the way.

3 To make the dressing, puree the sunflower seeds, olive oil, lemon juice, salt, honey and water in a blender.

4 Combine the shallots and pumpkin with your cooked quinoa and wild rice in a large bowl and pour the dressing over. Garnish with parsley and serve. 🍴

• Shiren Janus is a dietitian at Health Factory, www.healthfactory.com.
• Kay Vosloo works at Talise Wellness Polyclinic, 04-3666810.



CHINN up!

Maverick TV chef Bobby Chinn talks Sudeshna Ghosh through his colourful journey from Wall Street to Vietnam – with a detour as a stand-up comic in between – on which, a positive, unflappable attitude was his only constant companion.

“I never ate baby food”, says Bobby Chinn. “My family couldn’t get me to eat, but when I tried moulakhiyeh for the first time, you couldn’t stop me from eating! My appreciation of food started when I went to Egypt when I was six.”

With a nomadic childhood and unusual heritage – he was born in New Zealand to to Egyptian-Chinese/American parents, schooled in England and did most of his growing up in the US – Bobby’s life wasn’t ever likely to be an average one. But that it would be centred around food, he hadn’t planned. “It was a karmic cycle of events that led me here. I walked into food not a hundred per cent qualified, but I had passion and a vision,” he explains.

Karma it certainly sounds like, as he recounts how he stumbled into food after a stint in finance. “I was good at it,” he says in a matter-of-fact way. “But I hated it. I wanted to go see the world on my own. It is a journey that can be lonely, humiliating and painful, but very rewarding if you can get through it.”

Hungry to learn

I have no doubt in my mind that he was good at finance. His apparently random ramblings reveal an evolved intelligence and acute perceptiveness, both of which

undoubtedly helped him make the world his oyster, literally. But not before he got himself fired from his Wall Street job, and started looking for a profession in the yellow pages. Their family doctor, “who was like a life coach”, helped steer him towards food in the first place, by giving him the opportunity to join his brother’s seafood supply business. “I got to meet a lot of cool chefs then, and that’s when I started thinking – I could do this,” says Bobby.

He nearly went to a French culinary institute afterwards, but dropped out. Instead, he decided to go to comedy school, and performed as a stand-up comic in LA for a while in between. He didn’t entirely sever his connection with food though, as he continued to put himself through the paces by working in a restaurant in San Francisco – where he joined as head waiter, but promptly got himself demoted.

Soon after, he found himself in Vietnam – where he went in a corporate role at his father’s behest – and that’s when his love affair with the fresh, flavourful cuisine began. “Vietnamese food is an awakening. It’s not fussy, each bite is unique,” he says. “It’s food made for people by people.”

Returning back to the US, he immersed himself in food again, this time as an unpaid apprentice at leading French chef Hubert Keller’s Fleur de Lys restaurant in San Francisco. Eager to learn, he worked there for a year, and continued developing relationships with top chefs. As destiny would have it, a chance encounter with award-winning California chef Gary Danko led him to the book *Burgundy Stars* (Little Brown & Co.), which, combined with the fact that his then girlfriend’s father owned restaurants in France, saw him soon packing his bags for a European sojourn. Bobby describes his time working for the Troisgros family restaurants as “brief, but educational”. He had to return to the US for back surgery, from an injury he had got when working in San Francisco, and this rendered him

unable to work as a professional chef. Determined not to let that stop him, Bobby followed his heart back to Vietnam, where he tapped into a gap in the market to run several acclaimed restaurants. "America had sort of ingrained a type of racist bias towards Vietnam, around the world," he says. "Vietnamese cuisine sells itself for those who go there. I kind of brought it to the world, put it on the map."

Not least with his award-winning restaurant, Restaurant Bobby Chinn, which he opened in 2001. The restaurant fuses Western and Asian cuisine to great effect, in the intimate setting of the lower floor at his home in Hanoi. It is here that he has played host to various celebrities, including Bill Clinton, for whom he cooked vegan Indian food.

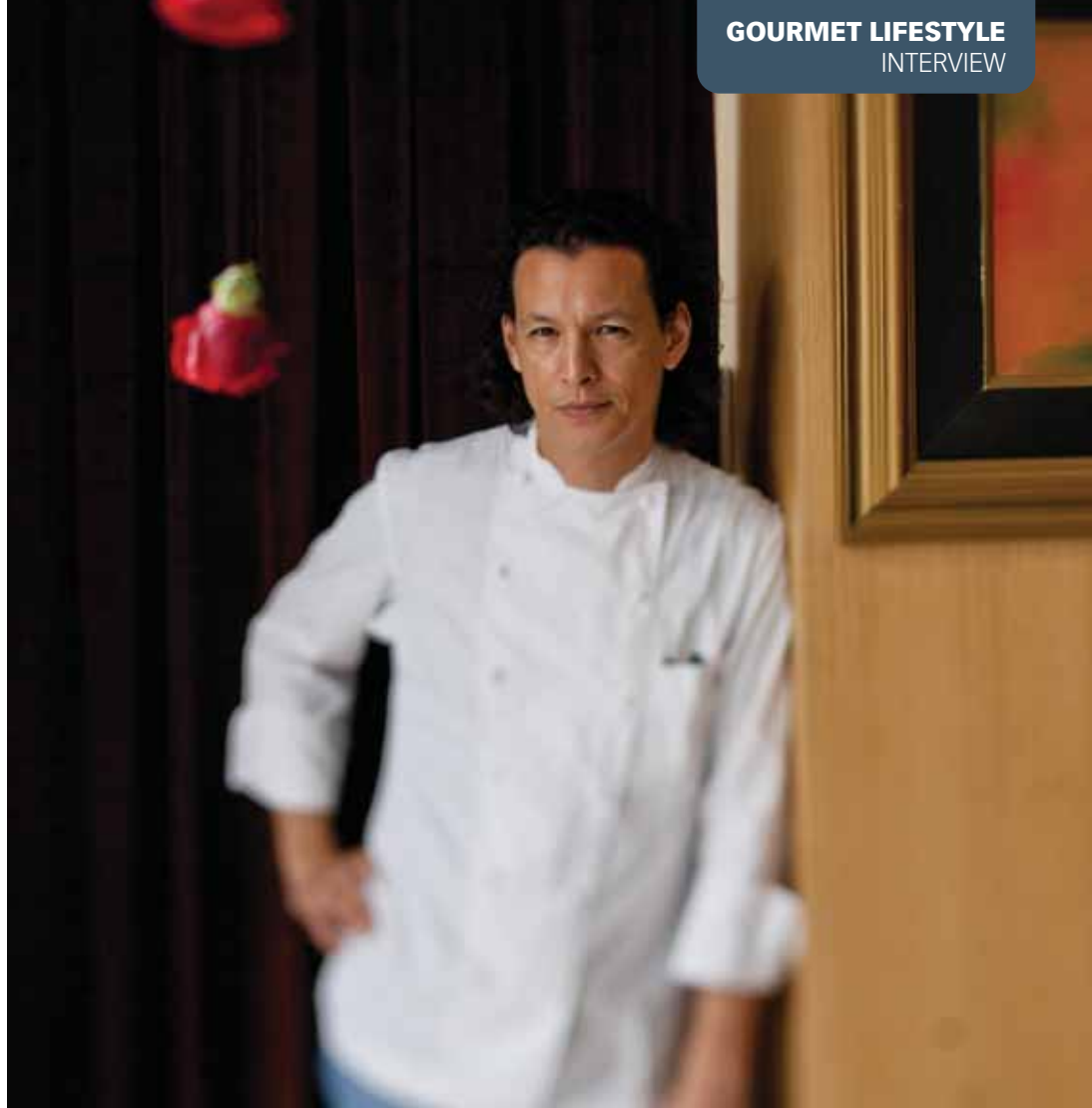
Last year, he opened a second outpost of the restaurant in Ho Chi Minh city, which reflects the multiculturalism of Bobby's personality, with its market-driven, seasonal menu, and relaxed environment complete with Egyptian shisha.

Screen (hot)shot

But, popular as his restaurants are, it was the TV series 'World Café: Asia' that made him a household name. Like almost everything else in his life, this is also something that "just happened, and I wasn't overly excited about it," he says.

"I was offered this opportunity when TV cooking shows were just taking off," he says, modestly attributing its success to his ethnicity. "I brought to the table a person who wasn't uncomfortable anywhere, and wasn't intimidated by anything or anyone. My ethnicity helps, as I don't fit in anywhere but I'm accepted – that's how my life has always been." While some might see that laid-back unflappability and curiosity as cocky, it hasn't stopped him from earning the loyalty of fans around the world, a clutch of awards, and two succeeding series (another one on Asia, and one on the Middle East), plus another spin-off show, Bobby Chinn Cooks Asia. He has also published an award-winning book, *Wild Wild East – recipes and stories from Vietnam* (Conran Octopus), in which he weaves stories of his personal experience of setting up a business in Vietnam, with recipes.

The World Café series sees him travelling around different cities of Asia and the Middle East, sampling different foods, and also sharing recipes based on what he has learnt about the cuisine. "I think food is the fast track to truly understanding the history and culture of a people. They feel so much more patriotic about their food than they do for a football team, for example!" Bobby says.



"I really enjoy discovering new flavours. When I put something in my mouth, I go 'what is that,' he adds. That openness to new experiences, combined with his encyclopaedic knowledge of Asian food, and self-confessed ability to "describe food very well, I can make it sound sexy," is probably responsible for the programme's popularity.

familiar flavours and add something to it."

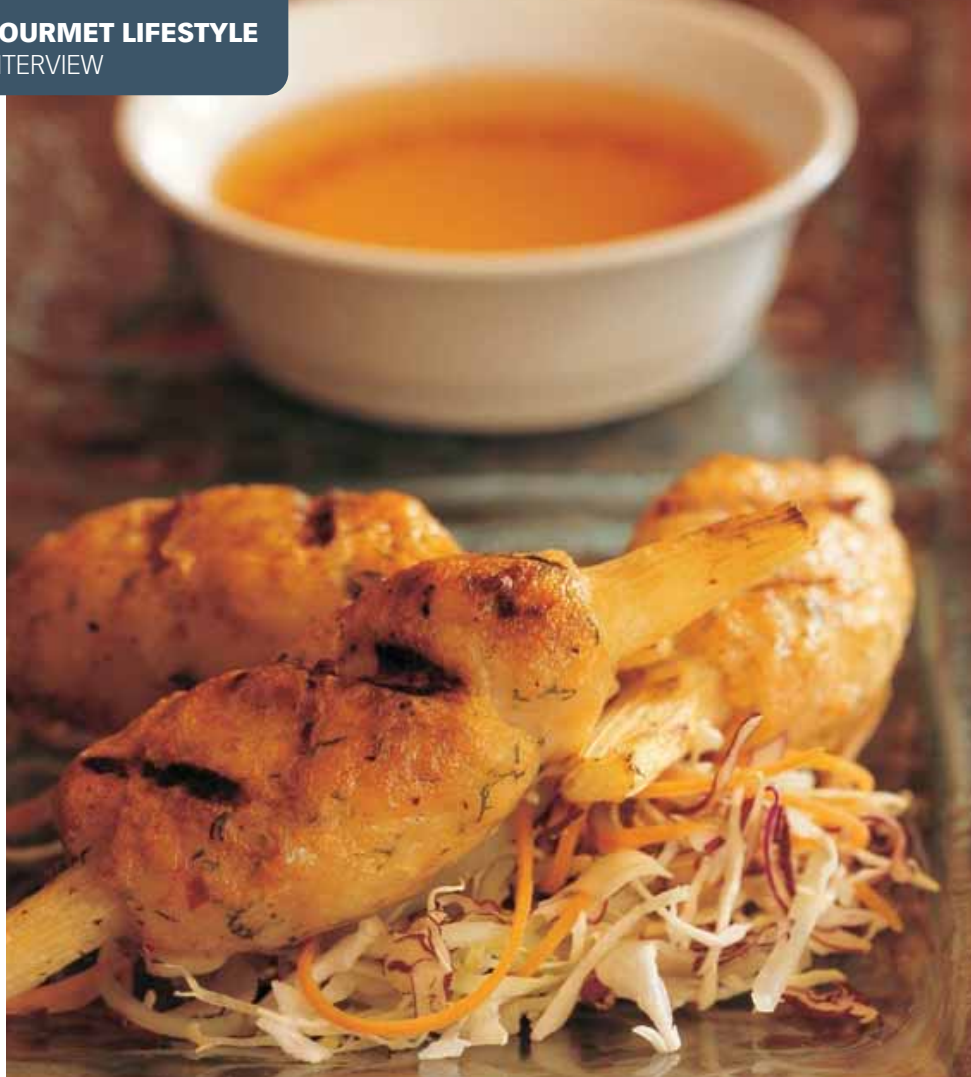
Whatever twist he is adding to a dish, his food always remains uncomplicated and easy. "I'm like an experimental housewife who has a certain amount of confidence and faith, and has been able to travel the world," he says. He would like to take that 'housewife' sensibility to Indian food, one of his favourite cuisines, next, for a TV show

“I am a person who isn't uncomfortable or intimidated by anything. I don't fit in anywhere but I'm accepted – that's how my life has always been.”

One of the highlights of the show, and in fact, Bobby's personal preference, is its focus on street food. "I love street food because it's just about the food, there is no bulls***. It's honest, pure, it's what the people eat, so it reflects the real culture," he says.

So, what are the most important lessons he has learnt from his travels? "Travel has given me history of food, made me question things a lot, and made me feel greater humility," he says. "It's also taught me what can be done with food – making a dish your own isn't cranial, it's simple. You just take

which will focus on low-fat and healthy cooking. "My focus going forward will be on detox and health, it becomes more important the older you get," he explains. He also plans to take modern technology head on and launch a series of Google Hangout shows, an innovative concept in the world of food media. I'm sure it will make for entertaining content. As, without taking anything away from his undeniable passion and insatiable curiosity about food, his greatest strength is that, as he himself says, "I talk a good game." >>



Seared Alaskan day boat scallops

SERVES 1

110g frozen peas

1 tbsp truffle oil

Salt and pepper

Sugar

A little duck fat or vegetable oil


3 king or jumbo scallops

40g shelled edamame

1 tsp lemon oil

1 Blanch the peas in a saucepan of boiling salted water for about 10 secs, then drain and tip them into ice-cold water. Peel the peas by hand or push them through a ricer to remove the skins. Put the peas in a blender and whizz until smooth, adding a little water and finishing with a little truffle oil. The consistency depends on you – if you want it thick, add some more truffle oil for an emulsified sauce, or add more water for a thinner mixture.

2 Season with salt, pepper and a little sugar, if the peas are bitter. Heat a frying pan with a little duck fat or vegetable oil until it is almost smoking. Season the scallops with salt and freshly ground pepper, place them in the pan and sear for about 20 secs. With a pair of tongs, or a spatula, move them around a little, making sure there is enough oil to coat them and give a nice brown colour. Flip the scallops over and cook for another 10 secs. The exact cooking time depends on the thickness of the scallops as well as the frying pan – they should be served medium rare.

3 Blanch the edamame in a saucepan of boiling salted water to heat them up. Drain, then place in a bowl and season. Spoon the truffle pea puree in the middle of a serving plate. Place the edamame on top, then top with the scallops. Garnish with a little lemon oil and serve. 



SIGNATURE RECIPES

Prawns on sugar cane

SERVES 4

300g raw prawns, shelled, deveined and chopped

5 tbsp shallots, chopped and crushed

1½ tsp garlic, crushed

1 tsp sugar

1 egg white

50g skinless sea bass fillets, minced

½ tsp fish sauce

½ tbsp five-spice powder

Salt

½ tbsp freshly ground black pepper

1 tbsp coriander leaves, chopped

4 pcs sugar cane, about 7-10cm long (available at select supermarkets)

4 tbsp vegetable oil

Peanut sauce or sweet and sour sauce, for dipping

1 Rinse the prawns thoroughly, drain and pat dry using paper towels.

2 In a food processor, combine the shallots,

garlic, sugar and egg white and blend to a paste. Add the chopped prawns and sea bass and pulse until fine. Add the fish sauce, five-spice powder, some salt and pepper. Stir in the coriander.

3 Peel away the rough outer skin of the sugar cane. Cut off the outer round segments so that you have a long rectangular block. Split each section lengthways into quarters to get 16 pieces.

4 Preheat the grill, griddle pan or a barbecue. Take 2-3 tbsp of the prawn mixture in one hand, place the top 5cm (2in) of the sugar cane into the mixture and roll the prawn mixture back and forth until it is smooth and evenly distributed around the stick. Repeat with the remaining paste and sugar cane.

5 Place the prawn sticks on the grill and brush them with vegetable oil. These should cook for about 5-8 mins over medium heat. Make sure you turn them over and keep the prawn paste well-oiled to prevent sticking.

6 Serve with dipping sauce and fresh salad.

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The U-shaped run of painted units defines the working area, while Moroccan tiles and a 1950s cooker add character

MY KITCHEN

Sam & Sam Clark

The chefs behind Moro, the acclaimed London restaurant, give Val Wotton a tour of their colourful kitchen at home.

Photographs GEOFF WILKINSON

Samantha and Samuel Clark opened their Moorish-inspired London restaurant Moro in 1997. Restaurant awards, three cookbooks and two children later, they now live in a Victorian house in north London with Luke, seven, and Eve, five. They are keen gardeners – their east London vegetable garden inspired their latest cookbook, *Moro East* – and grow as much of their own food as work and family life will allow.

Samuel, who designed your kitchen?

When we moved here two years ago, the house needed a lot of work. The most important thing for us in the kitchen was to sort out the light and space. We were quite pleased when we discovered the rather naff conservatory stuck on the back was half rotten and we could justify replacing it. We built on a cast-iron conservatory from France, which gives lovely views over the garden.

The old 1980s units were dreadful and falling apart, but they did form this U-shape that worked well, so we designed the new kitchen ourselves based on that, making space for our faithful old cooker.

How old is the cooker?

It's a reconditioned 1950s Chester, and we've had it for about 10 years and just love it. It's like a Rolls-Royce – everything works beautifully. There's nothing really to go wrong; you can turn the flame down very low or turn it right up – and it looks fantastic.

Who supplied the units?

Our builder made them. We wanted the appliances hidden away where possible, so it's a family room rather than a high-tech kitchen. The fridge-freezer and a bank of storage cupboards are tucked away in a narrow utility area behind the kitchen.

What about the worktops?

They were hugely expensive but they do make the kitchen. They're made from natural limestone, which has tiny fossils in it, and is incredibly tough, as well as beautiful. It's great for kneading bread or rolling out pastry and there's a circular cut-out so we can sweep rubbish straight into a bin below.

We also wanted surfaces we could chop on, so at either side of the cooker we have recycled teak, with knife slits at one end.

How much is recycled?

The taps are old hospital taps, which you turn on and off with your elbow. We like to mix old and new, but character pieces must still do the job properly. We recycle as much as possible ourselves – we have a garden, and grow herbs, fruit and flowers in the garden, so all our organic waste goes onto the compost heap. And growing our own means we buy less packaged stuff.

Samantha, what do you like about the kitchen?

I love the natural light and looking out to the garden; it's a calming space, but great to cook in. Our last kitchen was tiny, but this is a good family area; there's room for lots of people, but when you're cooking, you're never more than a step away from the sink, cooker or bin. And I love the open shelves, which are not only pleasing to look at but also practical. [GF](#)



Cookbooks and family clutter are stored on easy-to-access shelves



The flooring is a modern take on traditional encaustic tiles, when the pattern is inlaid rather than a glaze



The lever handles on these old hospital taps are very useful when you've got messy hands



Travel mementoes are displayed alongside practical kitchen items



SAM & SAM'S KITCHEN TIPS

- Don't buy old items like reconditioned taps unless you're sure they will fit your sink and modern plumbing, and function well.
- Avoid a 'kitchen showroom' look by opting for fully integrated appliances – fridge, dishwasher and washing machine – that are hidden behind your cupboard doors.
- It's more difficult to buy vintage gas cookers nowadays from a commercial supplier, as modern regulations require a flame-failure device to be fitted.

GET THE LOOK

The Maytag dishwasher has a stainless steel tub interior and a four-blade stainless steel chopper to prevent food particles from clogging the wash system. Dhs3,295, at Jashanmal stores.



Keep colourful accessories on display, like the Clarks have done, with this Aqua large fruit bowl. Dhs120, at Harvest Home.

Transparent glass vases on the countertop, for indoor plants or flowers, add a green touch. From Dhs65, at Crate and Barrel.



Make like the Clarks, who like to use their kitchen as a family room, and place table lamps in the kitchen to give it a cosy, lived-in feel. This Tripod wooden table lamp costs Dhs179 at Home Centre.



Foodie paradise

Food lovers flocked to Lafayette Gourmet for their inaugural Food Festival held last month.

Last month saw the Lafayette Gourmet food hall turn into a traditional market-style area, at their first Festival of Food. In an effort to not only showcase the variety of unique, high quality food products available for sale, and to eat at the various restaurant counters, but also to educate consumers on the importance of 'knowing where your food is coming from', the Lafayette Gourmet team brought in many of their suppliers and producers to interact with visitors over the five day period, with samplings and food master classes.

A true celebration of food, the festival saw everything from locally smoked salmon and worth-its-weight-in-gold Yemeni honey, to farm-fresh produce from France, organic vegetables, and Canadian beef on display, with one thing in common amongst all of them – a personal passion for food, and unwavering standards of quality. Most of all, it was an exercise in sharing the stories behind each product. "It is a great opportunity to see the story behind the products. It will also be great to get kids involved as well," says Russell Impiazzi,

Culinary Director of Lafayette Gourmet.

Passionate about quality and traceability, Chef Russell has personally hand-picked these partners for Lafayette Gourmet. And it's not hard to see why – whether it's the affable Bahir from Al Fumo smokehouse, who carries on the centuries-old smoking traditions of North American Indians that he personally learnt during his childhood, at his smokehouse in Dubai, to give his North Atlantic salmon and trout a unique flavour; or the heritage Canadian beef that comes from a sprawling farm in Alberta where the farmer knows each cow by name (well, almost!), each of these carefully curated products has a story behind it.

Other interesting products on display included the fine, premium produce – think elusive, seasonal Jersey Royal potatoes, and unique, delicious green radishes – sourced from Europe's largest food market, Rungis in Paris; and certified organic fruit and veg from all around the world brought here by eco warrior The Green League from Unifrutti; and delicious Sidr honey from Yemen, which, collected by semi-nomadic





beekeepers who have been following the same natural traditions for thousands of years, is prized for its pure, distinctive taste, nutritive value and limited availability.

A highlight was the new La Cave à Fromage cheese room, where more than 240 varieties of cheese from France, Italy, Spain and the UK – mainly sourced from small farmers producing in the old fashioned way – are stocked, with in-house cheese specialists guiding customers through the variety on offer and providing expert tips and advice.

It wasn't just suppliers and producers however, as the Lafayette Gourmet chefs also

got a chance to showcase their authentic offerings, whether it was traditional dim sum, aromatic curries, and hand-made pastas, or Tapeo, the restaurant concession inside Lafayette Gourmet, serving up authentic Spanish food such as paella.

With something to sate both individual tastes, and curiosity about food, this was a vibrant, colourful mélange of all things authentic, natural, traditional, and of course – delicious!



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AN ITALIAN SOJOURN

Discover Italy from a unique perspective, exploring two of its finest exports – its cuisine and its automobile tradition – in the unique Italy's Heart & Soul experience. The exclusive, 14-day über-luxury tour (limited to no more than 18 people), will include Alpine scenery; opulent hotels; amazing culinary experiences including an authentic dinner at an Italian family home; wine tastings; and long, lazy lunches in the countryside, combined with the opportunity to travel in vintage cars and private visits to Ferrari and Lamborghini factories. Tour dates for this season are June 7, June 21, September 13, and September 20, prices start from priced from \$15,290 (around Dhs56,000) per person, visit www.travcoa.com.

Now open!

Oblix, a New York-inspired grill and lounge located on the 32nd floor of the iconic Shard building, is the latest London hotspot to see and be seen at. A new concept from the people behind the Zuma and Roka brands, the Oblix menu celebrates British and European ingredients with a charcoal grill, wood-fired oven and spit-roast, along with a range of fine wines. With the lounge area featuring an interactive sommelier station, Oblix will offer a dining experience to match the stunning views of the city.



TASTE OF THE world

All the foodie news from around the globe.

Journey to an English country food fest

If you find yourself in the UK this month, make a beeline for Walthamstow, which is the location for Appetite – a new month-long celebration of food. The vibrant festival, which will run for 30 days from June 1, showcases the diverse variety of food, from Palestinian and Goan, to Hungarian, South American, Chinese and Italian, available in this north-eastern suburb of London. Events include a gourmet food fair with local, independent traders and producers; food walks; tea parties in the Waltham forest; a Tudor feast; pop up restaurants and suppers; plus community fund raisers and creative workshops. Some of the events are free, while others are paid, visit www.appetitefestival.co.uk for more info.

Gourmet in the sky

Think there's nothing worse than plane food? Gulf Air will have you rethinking that! The Bahrain-based airline pioneered the concept of in-flight chefs serving fine food to premium class passengers long before other airlines, and now they have launched a new menu for long-haul flights, which features a range of European and Middle Eastern dishes. Making the experience as restaurant-like as possible, the onboard SkyChefs discuss passenger preferences before serving the freshly prepared meals. www.gulfair.com.

With food at its heart

The Kempinski group of hotels has unveiled a new corporate philosophy which will have food and beverage as the new driving force behind its hotels globally. Having been founded by two restaurateur brothers over a 100 years ago, the company is going back to its food-driven roots with a variety of new initiatives. These include Sra Bua, a chain of restaurants located in hotels from Bangkok to Berlin and everywhere in between, which offer European interpretations of Asian cuisine; Die Küche, a concept in which the kitchen becomes a part of the restaurant with live cooking, and increased interaction between chefs and diners; and a focus on breakfast, which will feature signature rituals, and local twists. More innovative food concepts are also in the pipeline. www.kempinski.com.



5 great gastro getaways

The key to unlocking the true essence of a destination is through its local cuisine and culinary traditions. Jessica Hudson seeks out five fab holiday options where luxury meets flavour.



1 Galle, Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka, while a popular hotspot for ancient temples and tropical beaches, also has a culinary tradition that is equally interesting, drawing on influences from Portuguese and Dutch colonists, as well as India, its closest neighbour. Curries and spices are a staple of Sri Lankan food, where cinnamon, cardamom, curry leaves and turmeric are all grown in abundance, giving the local cuisine a unique identity.

For a true Sri Lankan gourmet experience, head to Kahanda Kanda, a chic boutique retreat in the south of the island, surrounded by tea plantations and with amazing jungle views over Koggala Lake. There are just eight private suites, beautifully designed with Asian antiques and contemporary Sri Lankan furnishings, and the emphasis is on friendly, personalised



service. With fruit, vegetables and herbs all grown on the estate, and seafood and meat bought daily at the local market, it offers an upscale epicurean experience. While the laid-back approach means you can choose to eat where you want, when you want (breakfast by the pool? No problem! Dinner in your suite – why not?), you are ensured fresh, healthy and delicious food each time. The gorgeous open-air shaded dining pavilion provides the perfect setting for contemporary Sri Lankan and Thai-inspired dishes that are served up, such as pumpkin and lemongrass soup, pan fried Mahi Mahi on a bed of Wasabi mash, and banana tarte tartin served with homemade ice cream.

Whatever you do, don't miss the local specialty, egg hoppers, made with pancake batter, coconut

milk and with a fried egg in the middle, for breakfast. So renowned has the food become at Kahanda Kahanda, they now offer private cookery classes on request.

While there, make it a point to venture out to the ancient fort town of Galle nearby, where you will find a variety of restaurants and quirky cafes, from Harry's Bar at The Sun House set high up on the hill, to Amangalla's fine dining cuisine. Or for a more relaxed meal, try Wijayu Beach Club for delicious thin crust pizza, or Kingfishers in Unawatuna, which is famous amongst locals for their 'devilled' seafood and secret spicy sauce.

NEED TO KNOW: Suites are priced from US\$304 (around Dh\$1,100) per night. Visit www.kahandakanda.com.

2 Cape Winelands, South Africa

Blessed with beautiful and diverse landscapes, and the most fabulous food, South Africa is a gastronomical gem waiting to be discovered. The Cape Winelands are a hot house of fabulous restaurants and some of the world's best vineyards. Just a 45-minute drive from the bustling city of Cape Town, you can find yourself at Babylonstoren, a boutique hotel with a remarkable restaurant Babel, which should be on any foodie's bucket list.

This stunning Cape Dutch farm and elegant cottages are surrounded by beautifully landscaped organic gardens with scented herb beds, citrus orchards, and brightly coloured vegetables. Guests can wander in and pick their own fruit, veg and herbs (there are over 300 types of edible plants) and each cottage boasts a designer kitchen equipped with

all the gear any master chef would be happy to have.

While self-catering is definitely more glamorous here than anywhere else, the fresh farmhouse style cuisine at their glass-enclosed restaurant Babel is what has earned the resort its culinary credentials. Food reflects the colours of the season and salads are colour-coded 'green' (with cucumber and courgette), red (with beetroot, radish and guava) or yellow (with butternut squash, corn and papaya). The fresh Franschoek Trout is phenomenal, as is the dark chocolate terrine with olives and toasted walnuts.

If you feel the need to work off all the feasting, simply hop onto a mountain bike for a ride around the farm and enjoy the magnificent African sunsets across the valleys of vineyards.

NEED TO KNOW: Room rates from ZAR4,500 (around Dhs1,800) per room per night, including breakfast. Visit www.babylonstoren.com.



3 Florence, Italy

There are few foodie destinations as well known as Tuscany, and there is no better place to learn classic Italian cooking than in the luxurious surroundings of Villa Mangiacane. Set just outside Florence, the majestic 15th century villa is nestled within 600 acres of vineyards, olive groves and landscaped gardens brimming with roses and lemon trees, and exquisitely decorated with priceless antiques, artwork, frescoes, and the finest fabrics. No two rooms are the same, and the sumptuous bedrooms and suites can be rented separately, or as an exclusive villa rental.

But, what makes a stay here truly unique are the renowned Tuscan cooking classes, conducted by Francesca Maria Boni, an engaging Florentine cook. Each class starts with selecting fresh ingredients for cooking from the on-site herb garden, after which, you learn to prepare dishes like handmade gnocchi or risotto, and traditional meat or fish recipes using seasonal Tuscan ingredients – such as traditional Bistecca alla Fiorentina, T-bone steaks from the best butcher in Tuscany – in the three-hour session. You do, of course, get to enjoy the meals you've prepared too, along with a glass of Villa Mangiacane's Chianti Classico wine and the hotel's own olive oil made from handpicked Frantoio, Moraiolo, Leccino and Pendolino olives. With the historical and cultural sights of Florence just a 15 minute drive away, you can work up an appetite by wandering along the Arno and exploring the greatest collection of Renaissance art on earth, before heading back to the villa for another sumptuous Italian meal.

NEED TO KNOW: Flavours of Chianti three-night package costs from E1,500 (about Dhs7,150) for two people, and includes a three-course welcome dinner, cooking lesson, plus olive oil and wine tasting. Visit www.mangiacane.com. >>





4 Domaine de Bel Ombre, Mauritius

In the middle of the Indian Ocean lies an island paradise, known for its white sands, rich marine life and multicultural soul. A mix of Creole, French, African and Indian inhabitants has greatly influenced and infused the island's cuisine – where else can you enjoy exotic dishes such as bourgeois fillet in a spicy sesame seed crust with saffron rice?

The Heritage Resorts complex in the Domaine de Bel Ombre estate, set in the unspoilt south of

the island, is an excellent choice for gourmet travellers. Consisting of two five star beach resorts and a collection of luxurious colonial-style villas, their new all-inclusive Gourmet Bliss Package offers a fantastic choice of 11 restaurants including pan-Asian fare at Gin'ja (they have the freshest sushi you'll ever taste), authentic Mauritian cuisine at their 19th Century Chateau de Bel Ombre, and African evenings dining on fresh game around a campfire at Boma. You can also try their hand at recreating a traditional Mauritian dish with a cooking course held at Annabella's Kitchen, using fresh produce from the local markets. For those days when you want to be pampered, follow up a luxe spa treatment with a meal from a personal chef in the privacy of your own suite or villa. There's plenty to keep the whole family occupied while you're fine-tuning your culinary skills, whether it's complimentary unlimited green fees on their 18 hole championship golf course, or water and land sports.

NEED TO KNOW: Prices start from 277 Euros (around Dhs1,300) per room per night including breakfast, visit www.heritageresorts.mu.

5 Hoi An, Vietnam

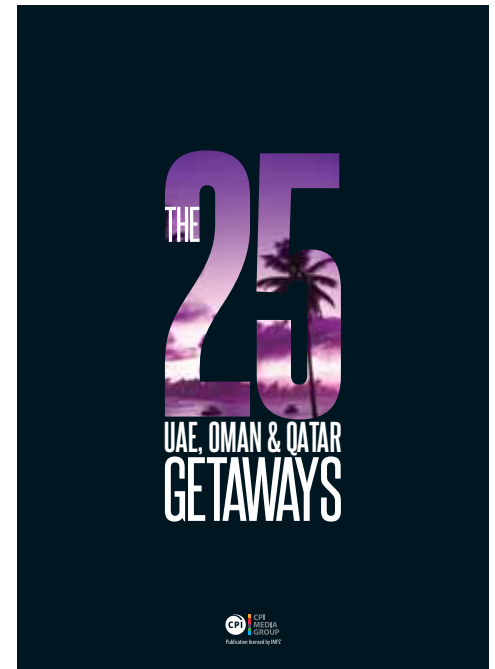
The picturesque, old spice trade harbour of Hoi An is an exciting destination for foodies, teeming with options whether it's upscale eateries, or bustling street food markets serving the best bowls of pho bo, Vietnam's unofficial national dish of beef noodles. Check in at the romantic Nam Hai Hotel, a GHM property set on a pristine beachfront. Overlooking the Cham islands, the all-villa resort is designed with influences of a traditional Vietnamese garden house in mind, with each villa featuring unique luxury touches such as a lacquered eggshell bath, and some fitted out with private kitchens. Three different restaurants offer gourmet cuisine both Western-style as well as local delicacies. But for the ultimate Vietnamese culinary experience, make a beeline for the Green Bamboo Cooking School, where lovely resident chef Van offer a detailed tour of Hoi An's lively food markets – to shop for exotic ingredients like star anise, banana flower and lemongrass – before heading back to the school to learn a range of delicious Vietnamese recipes. You can then sit back and enjoy your cookery efforts with a memorable group lunch and a souvenir goodie bag to take home. And when you're not cooking or eating, there is plenty to explore in the UNESCO heritage site with its narrow streets crammed with colourful markets, ancient buildings, chic boutiques and bespoke tailors.

NEED TO KNOW: Asia-based luxury tour operator Lightfoot Travel design tailor-made Vietnam itineraries with a culinary focus, visit www.lightfoottravel.com for more info. Room rates at Nam Hai start from \$550 (around Dhs2,000) per night, visit ghmhotels.com. Prices for Green Bamboo cooking classes start from \$30 (Dhs110), visit www.greenbamboo-hoian.com.



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Lap up London!

Whether it's fine dining experiences, or outstanding pub grub; independent gourmet stores or world-renowned food halls; award-winning restaurants or hidden gems, London's foodie scene has truly come of age. Melanie Mingas sniffs out some of the finest epicurean experiences in the British capital.

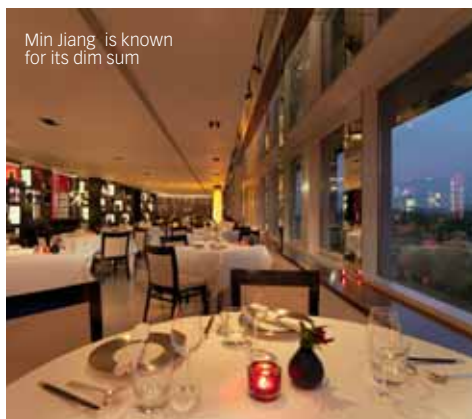
If 2012 was Britain's year to shine, then 2013 will be its year to taste – long gone are the Olympics and the Thames-side Royal processions marking the Diamond Jubilee, but what is still in season are the island nation's seasonal produce and traditional tastes – as alluring to the country's 30 million average annual visitors, as any of the more traditional sights.

Far from the stodgy staples long associated with British cuisine, today's tastes are cosmopolitan, multicultural, experimental and, as a result, full of flavour – just like Londoners themselves. Whether it's adding new zest to old dishes or putting a traditional twist on international favourites, the British appetite today is one that craves adventure.

"London is the greatest food city in the world and for tourists, food and shopping are now as popular as Buckingham Palace," says award-winning Executive Head Chef Steve Munkley, at Royal Garden Hotel's Chinese restaurant, Min Jiang. From one of London's most exclusive addresses, Chef Munkley has seen visitor numbers soar over recent years, with the focus very much on food. While many will credit the increasing popularity to the infusion of different cuisines, the growing interest in London's food scene is rooted in the city's rich history, culture and seasonality.

Here is my pick of some can't miss dining and food-shopping experiences in London:

Min Jiang is known for its dim sum



REFINED DINING

While the Middle East is no stranger to the finest of dining experiences – and the crème de la crème of international culinary talent – the added allure of London combines unrivalled choice with the city's unique heritage.

The Wolseley on Piccadilly is a venue as well known for its espresso cups of rich hot chocolate as it is for its celebrity clientele; the story goes, cast and crew from James Bond film *Skyfall* held pre-production meetings here. A place to glimpse London life in all its glamour, less familiar faces frequent the former car showroom and bank – which to this day retains the full glory of its art deco charm – throughout the day, from the city traders' breakfast rush, to the evening crowd frequenting the towering dining space of this cultured café until its midnight close. Menu highlights include Eggs Florentine, the

Royal Plateau de Fruits de Mer and Côte to Boeuf (prices start from £14, around Dhs40).

As is the nature of a city as diverse and culturally porous as London, there are a number of dining venues inspired by the Far East. Sunday is the best day to factor in a dim sum feast overlooking Kensington Palace from Min Jiang, on the top floor of The Royal Garden Hotel, Kensington High Street. Famous (and we mean really famous) for its Dim Sum ((£6 per dish) and Peking Duck – roasted and finished with applewood in a wood burning oven – this is the place to sample authentic Chinese.

One of the most peculiar quirks of British cuisine is its innovation of Indian dishes. So fond are the Brits of a curry, the affinity has led to the invention of dishes such as balti and chicken tikka, which although Indian-inspired, are British born adaptations of Indian classics. Michelin starred chef, Atul Kochhar, who recently opened Rang Mahal at Dubai's Marriott Marquis hotel, is regarded as one of the chefs who redefined Indian cuisine for the western palate. "Curry has become so interwoven in our national fabric, that not only do we now find





curries on pub menus and pizzas, we have also created our own,” Chef Kochhar explains from his award-winning London restaurant, Benares.

The Berkeley Square dining experience that is Benares, led to Chef Kochhar's second Michelin Star, and although often packed out, it is a five star dining experience that should be worked into any London holiday. The main restaurant is vast yet intimate, and the chef's table offers an envious view of the cooking action. Dishes are contemporary and varied, with excellent poultry and seafood grill options for Indian food fans seeking new, rather than reinvented.

CASUAL COMFORTS

Another culinary experience held dear in Britain is an establishment today known as the Gastro Pub – a modern take on the pub which now centres on quality, honest, comfort food. Inspired by the concept, but disappointed with its interpretations, brothers Tom and Ed Martin opened their own chain of gastro pubs in 2000, and are today the proud landlords of 11 such properties around the capital. Their philosophy of authenticity makes use

of the finest British produce, some of which cannot be found anywhere else.

The Gun, a 200 year old property at London Docklands – once frequented by Lord Nelson – was restored by the brothers after a devastating fire in 2001 and is now the regular haunt of hundreds of locals who flock to the quaint, Grade II-listed gem for favourites such as the Coldharbour Pie and 35 day aged Cumbrian Longhorn rib-eye steak (prices start from £15). What's more, the restaurant's service includes a chauffeur service from the nearby Canary Wharf!

TIME FOR TEA

If your ideal afternoon is spent relaxing over copious amounts of tea and baked goodies, then a 'proper' Afternoon Tea, or High Tea as it is also known – a quintessentially British tradition dating back to the 1800s – is the only place to be between 2pm and 5pm, in London. “The rules? You're not allowed to talk about religion, politics or other subjects that will cause arguments. Afternoon tea is a relaxed, delicate and fine affair,” says 10th generation brand ambassador for Twinings Tea, Stephen Twining.

Twining, who reveals that his own tea drinking habits range from an early morning English Breakfast through to Earl (and Lady) Grey, winding down to green tea in the evenings, personally enjoys the traditional (and award winning) experience of The Athenaeum, in Mayfair (from £29.50). Offering an extensive menu of teas, you can work your way through ten varieties while sampling cucumber or smoked salmon sandwiches, followed by scones and English crumpets.

To find the best afternoon teas, scout out offerings that are accredited by The Tea Guild – >>



Tea at Peyton and Byrne



The Gun is housed in a 200 year old property



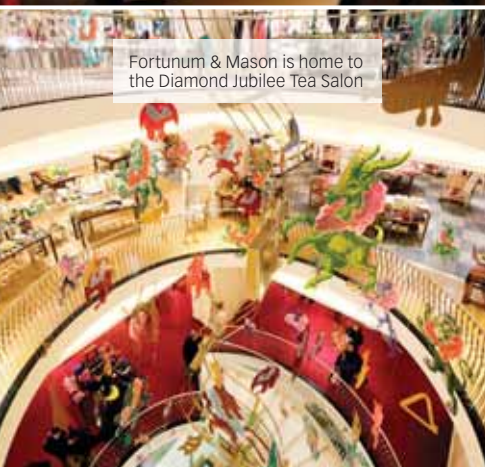
Paxton & Whitfield is a cheese haven



Benares should be on any curry lover's must-visit list



Rococo specialises in couture chocolates



Fortnum & Mason is home to the Diamond Jubilee Tea Salon



The Harrods Food Hall is world renowned

this is where the English tea fanaticism really comes into its own – or have won one of the guild's annual awards, widely considered to be 'the Oscars of the tea world'. In 2012, The Athenaeum won 'Top London Afternoon Tea', and as a result, is full most afternoons.

For an afternoon tea with style, fashionistas would be hard pressed to find a tea more entertaining and picturesque than Pret-a-Portea at The Berkeley Hotel (from £39). Widely regarded as one of London's top 10 teas, passionate pastry chef Mourad Khayat and his team spend three days creating each of the designer-inspired biscuits and cakes.

Bringing the afternoon tea to an ever-wider audience, leading catering company Peyton and Byrne has opened a string of bakeries across London, including shops at The British Library and St Pancras, for the time-pressed tea drinker. These quick-fix tea salons are perfect to break up an afternoon of shopping or to take shelter from the inevitable rain! Menu highlights include the Oreo muffins, carrot cake and cheesecake topped with fresh fruit in syrup. To enjoy a more leisurely Peyton and Byrne experience, you could visit The Wallace, a French style brasserie housed in a Marylebone art gallery, where Head Chef Ivan Simeoli has pioneered a cucumber sandwich in a jar and a candyfloss encased caramel cherry (£17.50).

RETAIL THERAPY

No holiday for a foodie is complete without some gourmet shopping, and in London, there's no better starting point than Harrods. The renowned food halls are based on a concession model, with names such as Tamarind and Bateel sitting alongside a wealth of Harrods-labelled goods, providing everything you need, whether it's for a lavish dinner party, a Hyde Park picnic or simply souvenirs to bring home. The market-style eateries located around the food hall, cooking dishes from the neighbouring counters, offer a tantalising smorgasbord of colours, aromas and flavours.


Also on the historic high street, the only place for locally produced honey (so local, the bees live on the roof of the store!), world famous Monarch Marmalade and a lot of tea, is Fortnum and Mason, in Piccadilly. Founded 300 years ago, the store holds a Royal Warrant and is also home to the Diamond Jubilee Tea Salon, opened by the Queen, Duchess of Cornwall and the Duchess of Cambridge last year. A five-storey fairground of playful colours and original furnishings – think wind-up biscuit tins playing 'Land of Hope and Glory' – it's an English

experience like no other.

If you'd like to tap into the growing penchant for 'local and organic', you will find a more homely, farmed approach to food in smaller, independent stores as such as Daylesford in Pimlico. This charming grocery café stocks products mostly from its own local farm, bakery and creamery, with a few select producers in mainland Europe used for specialist goods. The shop has won more than 90 international awards for its produce over the past three years, and is best visited during its farmer's market on a Saturday morning.

In fact, London is brimming with independent food stores like this, each of which surpasses the concept of specialist. Paxton and Whitfield, hidden away on Jermyn Street, has been selling the finest and rarest cheeses from around the UK and Europe for 200 years and even runs its own cheese society. Like Fortnum and Mason, this backstreet gem has held a Royal Warrant since 1850, when the store was appointed cheesemonger to HM Queen Victoria. Today the shop stocks Cheddar Smoked Ceodre, Langres, Petit Munster and Selles Sur Cher. Knowledgeable staff are on hand to advise customers how to put together the perfect cheeseboard.

For those with a sweet tooth, the only place to go for chocolate is Rococo Chocolates, founded by textile designer Chantel Coady in 1983. Chantel prints her textiles designs onto each of the 31 varieties of handmade chocolate sold at the Montcomb Street store, and is known for the chocolate tastings and workshops she holds for chocoholics in the area.

To truly taste London's charm could take a lifetime, but punctuate each culinary encounter with Thames-side walks and afternoons in museums, and you will be left with a taste to savour for years. 

TRAVEL DIARY

WHERE TO STAY The Royal Gardens Hotel is centrally located on Kensington High Street with fantastic palace views. Room rates start from £320 (around Dhs1,800), visit royalgardenhotel.co.uk.

GETTING THERE Emirates, British Airways and Virgin Atlantic all fly direct from Dubai, with economy fares starting at Dhs3,500.



TOWN & COUNTRY

If you want to take your culinary experience in the UK to the next level, head out of the city to the captivating Le Manoir aux QuatSaisons in Great Milton, Oxfordshire. A personal ambition of Chef Raymond Blanc, Le Manoir is a sprawling country retreat, with 64 lavish boutique guest rooms, a two Michelin Star restaurant and the Raymond Blanc Cookery School. Not to mention the 'wow' factor to match. From the moment you arrive in the sleepy English village less than an hour's drive from London, the Le Manoir experience is one of luxury. So fixated is Chef Raymond on the quality of the guest experience, that he even selects the bath pillows himself.

The sole philosophy behind Le Manoir is taste – and to create the richest and most authentic flavours, anything that passes your lips while on the grounds has been sourced from local farms or grown on-site.

In the adjoining cookery school, each of the 13 menus has been crafted by Chef Raymond and he regularly drops by classes to meet the aspiring chefs. Classes are held in groups of up to ten students by one of his four most trusted chefs, with the more complicated lessons taking up to four days.

Courses change annually, with the nine-course Seasonal Dinner Party menu changing four times a year. Despite the lavish and often intimidating menu students face – think brioche and guinea fowl – patient and experienced tutors guide the class through each step and even prep some of the more complex elements in advance. The takeaway recipe and techniques handbooks are particularly useful when recreating the experience at home. Courses are served as they are made and enjoyed with the chef who is on hand for any personalised advice. Currently, the school is offering chocolate, patisserie, vegetarian and fish themed courses.

Need to know: Prices for the Raymond Blanc Cookery School Experience starts from £1,623 (around Dhs9,000) for two, including accommodation, breakfast, a nine-course Menu Decouverte Dinner, a day in The Raymond Blanc Cookery School and personalised cookery school apron. Students also receive a book of their recipes and cooking technique tips. Visit www.manoir.com.

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Safari | luxe

A luxury resort nestled in a private conservancy in Kenya turns out to be a surprise gourmet destination, Sudeshna Ghosh discovers.

The concepts of safari and luxury couldn't be more far removed from each other – one is about roughing it out in the midst of wilderness, and getting back to nature; the other, man-made mod-cons and fine dining experiences that are all about pampering and indulgence. And yet, the luxurious Lake Elementeita Serena camp in Kenya seems to have effortlessly married the two, to give travellers the ultimate combination of creature comforts with real-life jungle creatures.

This is no ordinary tented camp – located on the banks of a pristine salt-water lake inside the Soysambu conservancy, this intimate resort takes rustic luxury to a whole other level, starting with the welcome glass of bubbly served on arrival. The reserve, a mere two hours' drive from Nairobi, is home to hundreds of bird species, as well as the usual safari suspects, including herds of zebras, giraffes, water buffaloes and lots more.

The resort, nestled amidst acacia groves in the midst of the golden savannah, and overlooked by volcanic mountains, offers faux tent-style accommodation all offering direct views of the serene lake. The generously proportioned rooms (sorry, tents) boast private verandahs, four-poster beds and oversized bathrooms with luxury amenities. If you can tear yourself away from the room, the tastefully appointed lounge area – which looks like the drawing room of a wealthy aristocrat, complete with vintage memorabilia reminiscing a colonial heritage – is equally inviting.

You can choose to do as much or as little as you want here. Typical activities of a safari resort, ranging from game drives to bush dinners, are available, but I chose to go down the as-little-as-possible route. Waking up to exotic bird calls I'd never heard before

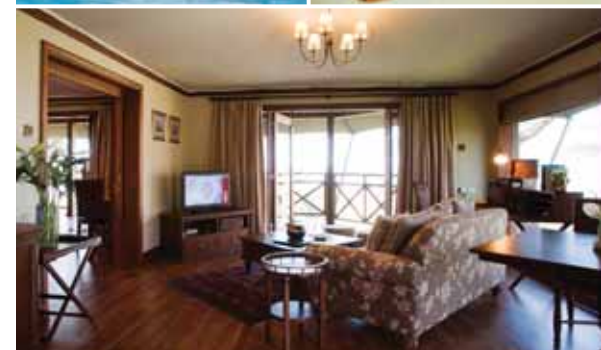
and my morning cup of tea looking out to the flamingo-fringed lake from the verandah; lazy laps in the infinity pool; and relaxed alfresco lunches feasting on local produce was about all the exertion I put myself through.

The food at the resort's fine dining restaurant is superlative – it never fails to amaze me how such gourmet delicacies can be rustled up in remote locations like this – and the service strikes that perfect balance between friendly and discreet. All four-course meals are served in a set menu style, with plenty of choices to satisfy any palate – from classic European flavours to Indian curries, and traditional African delicacies. Head chef Paul Mwara invests a lot of time in experimenting with different herbs and other ingredients in an effort to create unique, exciting new tastes in a constantly changing menu that reflects seasonal trends. "We get our ingredients from the freshest sources, and also make it a point to interact with guests, so we can incorporate their tastes and preferences in the food," he says.

So, while you could be tucking into Honey glazed duck breast served with red currant gastrique and creamed potatoes one day, it might be a Pan fried escalope of milk-fed turkey with a cinnamon and raisin sauce the next day; a Spring panzanella could be followed by an oxtail soup; you could choose between a Beef wellington served with tarragon jus, or a Thai vegetable stir-fry; and a Baingan (aubergine) masala could compete for your attention with a Mattar paneer (Peas and cottage cheese curry). In spite of the diversity of cuisines, every dish is impeccably presented, and packed with flavour. The dessert options includes irresistible raspberry parfaits, chocolate terrines,

and Armagnac crème brulee to name just a few, and is typically followed by a cheese course, and petit fours, washed down by the beautiful freshly brewed Kenyan coffee. Suffice to say, the team ensure you don't go hungry!

An un-missable highlight of a stay here has to be the 'Sundowners at the Cliff' experience. An afternoon game drive – with spotting of rare Rothschild giraffes, water buffaloes, gazelles and more on the menu – ends at a cliff edge with a vantage point over the picturesque lake, where a private set-up of canapés and chilled beverages await. Complete with white linens, silverware, and tasty light bites like cheese and fruit skewers, salmon rosettes, and fish fingers, this is a rare culinary experience. Watching the quintessential African sunset over the lake, while getting pampered by the attentive staff on hand, offers a postcard-perfect moment of utter tranquility. 



TRAVEL DIARY

- Room rates start from \$US400 (around Dhs1,470) per night. The 'Sundowners at the Cliff' experience costs \$US35 (around 130) per person. Visit www.serenahotels.com/serenaelmenteita for more.
- Kenya Airways offers direct daily flights from Dubai to Nairobi, and the resort can arrange airport transfers. Ticket prices start from around Dhs2,450, and if you want to get your trip off to a luxurious start, business class tickets cost from a surprisingly affordable Dhs7,400. Kenyaairways.com.

Far East movement

Make the most of a trip to Asia's hottest urban spots, Singapore and Tokyo, with our what-not-to-miss guide.

DISCOVER MORE TO SINGAPORE

BEST EATS

Most Singaporeans are obsessed by food but don't cook much at home, which explains the vast choice of restaurants and stalls featuring Chinese, Malay, Peranakan or Indian food. For sophisticated, Chinese-inspired dining, head to My Humble House in the Esplanade Mall on Singapore's buzzing waterside. Dishes have poetic names like 'Tender, delightful, divine', a baked fillet of silver cod in sake sauce, which really lived up to its name. Expect to pay from S\$75 (around Dh\$220) per head for dinner.

The Imperial Herbal restaurant on Seah Street is completely different – you'll probably be the only tourists there. Doris, the host, will guide you through the menu of Chinese dishes designed to balance your ying and yang. Favourites included Pork with chilli & woodberries ('good for vision').

Fish head curry is a speciality in the Little India district. It's not as scary as it sounds, as there's plenty of meat and a rich curry sauce to be mopped up with flatbreads or rice. For the best, step into the air-con cool of Muthu's Curry on Race Course Road.

As across most of Asia, street food is really where it's at. Singapore's street hawkers have been moved into purpose-built centres with strict hygiene standards – our favourite was the Maxwell Food Centre, near Chinatown. The must-have dish is Singapore chilli crab – chunks of sweet crab in a hot chilli tomato sauce.

For a real foodie fix, book a place at the At-Sunrice cookery school, perched up near Singapore's botanical gardens. For S\$100 (around Dh\$300), experience the Spice Garden Walk and Morning Gourmet class, which involves a morning walk, cookery demo and the chance to recreate their dishes and eat them on the patio for lunch. Visit at-sunrice.com.

MUST-SEE SIGHTS

Singapore's Esplanade development is a popular cultural centre with bars and the Esplanade Theatre. Take a bumboat ride down the river where you'll see traditional buildings dwarfed by skyscrapers and hear a guide to Singapore's history. Around S\$12 for a 40-minute ride.

For a traditional experience, step back in time at the Tea Chapter on Neil Road, and take in a full Chinese tea ceremony in one of the private rooms.

WHERE TO STAY

Singapore has all the major chain hotels, but for something a little different (and affordable), try the New Majestic Hotel in the heart of Chinatown. All rooms are uniquely decorated and there's a glamorous lobby area and rooftop pool. Room rates start from US\$150 (Dh\$550) per room per night. Visit newmajestichotel.com.



THIS PAGE, FROM TOP: The Esplanade centre; The peaceful haven of Tea Chapter is great for sampling varieties of teas; Street food favourite, flaky bread served with a curry; Boat Quay is near the Central Business District





THIS PAGE, FROM TOP Most Japanese chefs boast superb knife skills; A group of 'One day Geisha' Japanese girls; Yakitori, small kebabs of chargrilled meat and fish, are a popular bar snack with off-duty workers; The Tsukiji wholesale fish market



A TASTE OF TOKYO

BEST EATS

Tokyo has to be one of the most diverse cities in the world for eating. With over 300,000 restaurants, serving everything from raw fish to a soothing bowl of noodles, you won't go hungry.

For traditional Japanese, head for The Palace Hotel and relax in the serene Wadakura restaurant, where diners sit around traditional low tables and enjoy lots of little courses served by geishas. Dishes might include tofu with soy, or for the more adventurous, raw spiny lobster. For dessert, don't feel short-changed if you are simply brought a slice of melon – 'perfect' fruit is highly prized and very expensive. You will be expected to remove your shoes before being seated.

For modern Japanese with stunning views, try Zipangu, on the 47th floor of the Caretta Shiodome building in Minato-ku. Every type of Japanese cooking is available here, including teppanyaki (food skilfully cooked in front of you) and more refined dishes like Lily bulb with sea urchin. For dessert, try the delicious Black sesame ice cream. The sake (rice wine) list is immense and can be served ice-cold as well as in the traditional warm style.

For more down-to-earth fare, enjoy some small kebabs of charcoal-cooked meat and a beer at one of the many yakitori bars beneath the tracks at Yurakucho Station. This is a great area for cheaper food.

MUST-SEE SIGHT

Pay an early-morning visit to the Tsukiji wholesale fish market, where over 16,000 stalls sell 450 seafood varieties. Sushi bars slicing the freshest sushi in Tokyo, to order, are on the perimeter of the market – even if it's not your idea of breakfast, it must be tried. Visit tsukiji-market.or.jp.

BEST BUYS

Traditional Japanese sweets, wagashi, are made from moulded bean paste and are available from the food halls of most big department stores. National tipple sake is served in small shot-size glasses and should be sipped rather than gulped. Pick up a bottle at Suzuden, a well-stocked sake shop with a bar. Visit the refrigerated storage rooms – the colder the room, the more pricy the sake. Suzuden 1-10-1 Yotsuya, Shinjuku-ku.

The Japanese take their tea very seriously. Yamamotoyama has been selling tea since 1690 and has all the implements needed to host your own tea ceremony. Yamamotoyama, 2-5-2 Nihonbashi, Chou-ku. Japanese knives are the choice of most master chefs. For ones as sharp as a samurai sword, and for any other kitchen equipment you can think of, head to Kappabashi Street – a goldmine for cooking-related items.

WHERE TO STAY

The ANA Hotel is near the museums in Akasaka and the nightlife of the Roppongi area. The hotel has ten restaurants and bars, and the Manhattan Lounge on the 36th floor has breathtaking views. Rooms start from about Dh\$735. ANA Hotel Tokyo, 12-33, Akasaka I-Chome, Minato-ku. Vanahotel.tokyo.jp.

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1 lucky winner will win a once-in-a-lifetime luxury holiday in South Africa's Cape Winelands region, with a four-night stay package at Erinvale Estate Hotel and Spa, and two nights at The Devon Valley Hotel.

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Next, you can head to The Devon Valley Hotel, a peaceful sanctuary just a short drive from Hefelberg, nestled in a corner of the Stellenbosch Winelands. Your luxury getaway continues with an all-inclusive two-night stay in a suite, with breakfast, lunch at Le Venue restaurant, and dinner at Flavours restaurant on both nights.

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Log on bbcgoodfoodme.com to enter this competition and simply answer this question:

What is the name of Erinvale Estate Hotel and Spa's signature restaurant?

*Terms & conditions apply. Employees of CPI Media Group are not eligible to enter. Winners will be selected on random basis from correct entries. Flights not included in the prize.

Bon Appétit experiences with Emirates NBD

Gaucha Dubai was the venue for the latest Emirates NBD Bon Appétit evening hosted by *BBC Good Food Middle East*, where a selected group of clients of the bank were invited to enjoy a sit-down three-course dinner in which they learnt to make their own ceviche, enjoyed a meat mini-masterclass from chef Jamie Robertson, and indulged in authentic desserts. Here is a look-back at some snapshots of the evening, and recipes for the decadent dessert trio from the restaurant's new menu.



Chef Jamie Robertson shared useful knowhow on different cuts of meat



BBC Good Food ME editor Sudeshna Ghosh welcomes guests



Everyone enjoyed making their own starters, an Ecuadorian ceviche



Getting hands-on proved to be a lot of fun!



Attendees walked away with a goodie bag with a free copy of the magazine



A lucky raffle draw winner received a dining voucher from Gaucha



Guests enjoyed three different cuts of steak for mains



Delicious sauces and sides were served with the main course



Chocolate truffles with white chocolate ganache

Lemon and poppyseed short bread

Salted caramel cheese cake

DESSERT TRIO

Chocolate truffles with white chocolate ganache

MAKES 15 TRUFFLES

- 45g caster sugar
- 4 egg yolks
- 40g butter (unsalted)
- 150g dark chocolate
- 190ml cream
- Cocoa powder or grated chocolate, for rolling

- 1 Place the sugar in a saucepan over a moderate heat and cook to form a syrup (this should take a few minutes but make sure you keep an eye on it so the sugar doesn't burn).
- 2 Place the egg yolks in a blender, and on a high speed, very slowly pour the syrup over the eggs until all the syrup is used. Keep blending until cold and the eggs are doubled in size.
- 3 Melt the butter and chocolate together over a pan of water in a mixing bowl. Once melted, allow to cool slightly and combine with the egg mixture.
- 4 Whip the cream and then fold into the chocolate mixture. Leave to set in the fridge for at least six hrs.
- 5 Roll into small balls, and then roll in cocoa powder or grated chocolate.

- 150g cream
- 3 eggs
- 150g brown sugar
- 250g Dulce de leche
- 1 heaped dessert spoon of Maldon sea salt

- 1 Toast the macadamia nuts until golden brown, then blitz in a food processor with the biscuits. Melt the butter and combine evenly with biscuit mixture in a mixing bowl. Pack tightly applying as much pressure as possible into a standard sized round cake tin and chill for at least two hrs.
- 2 Combine all of the ingredients for the filling in a food processor, and blend for around ten mins to ensure the mixture is smooth, and to incorporate some air into the mixture.
- 3 Pour over the base in the cake tin. Bake at 130C for 18 mins. Serve chilled.

Lemon and poppyseed short bread

MAKES 15 PIECES

- 100g butter (unsalted)
- 125g plain flour
- Half a lemon zest and a quarter of a lemon juiced
- 5g poppy seeds
- 60g caster sugar
- Mixed berries and custard, to serve (optional)

Salted caramel cheese cake

SERVES 12 – 14

- 50g macadamia nuts
- 200g digestive biscuits
- 50g unsalted butter
- FOR THE FILLING
- 750g Philadelphia cheese

- 1 Combine all the ingredients in a food processor and blend together until evenly combined. Chill for two hrs in the fridge then roll out to half a centimetre thick.
- 2 Bake for 12 mins at 160C. Remove from the oven and cut into 15 pieces whilst still hot, then allow to cool.
- 3 Top the shortbread with mixed berries and a little custard if you like.



The 'Bon Appétit Experience' is an extension of the 'Bon Appétit' programme that was launched in 2011 by Emirates NBD, which enables premium cardholders to enjoy exclusive discounts at over 600 restaurants in the UAE, when they use their Emirates NBD Debit or Credit Card.



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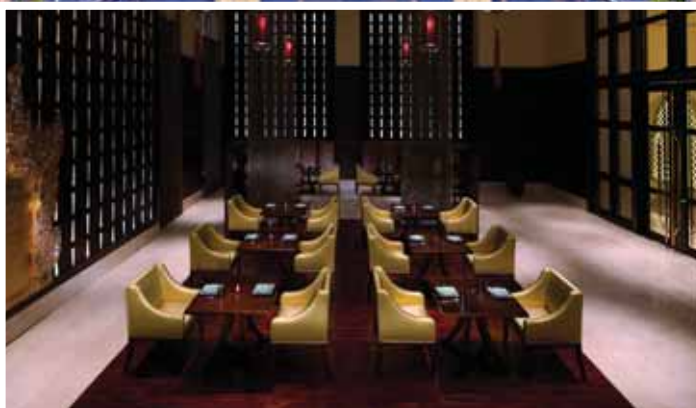
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1 winner can enjoy a luxurious getaway for two at the Eastern Mangroves Hotel & Spa by Anantara, with spa treats, dinner and drinks included


The luxurious retreat Eastern Mangroves Hotel & Spa by Anantara is nestled on a 1.2 kilometre stretch of Abu Dhabi's protected Eastern Mangroves district.

One lucky winner and a guest can escape to this luxe hotel for a weekend break,

staying in the opulent Kasara Mangroves suite which features a private plunge pool, views of the lush mangroves, and special privileges such as exclusive access to the lounge where evening cocktails and canapés are served. The prize includes breakfast, pre-dinner drinks at rooftop lounge Impressions, followed by dinner at signature Thai restaurant Pachaylen, with a bottle of wine. And the icing on the cake? A relaxing 90-minute Anantara spa massage.

Log on bbcgoodfoodme.com to enter this competition and simply answer this question:

What is the name of the suite the winner gets to stay at?

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Learn from the pros



Win amazing prizes including weekend stays



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Visit www.bbcgoodfoodme.com and sign up today.



What they said

Feedback from our Food Club members:

● *Thank you for inviting me to the Masterclass. It's my first time attending a Food Club event and I love that we get a chance to sample these delicious dishes.* ● – Ann Jones

● *The chef prepares everything so clearly in front of you, which makes it easy to cook at home. I'm really enjoying myself and look forward to attending other Food Club events.* ● – Faryal Riza

● *The class is presented in such a great way! All these dishes look really easy to replicate at home, and even though I hardly cook, I will definitely try these.* ● – Mitali Khanwani

Present your Food Club membership card at these outlets to receive a **fabulous discount!**



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MELIA DUBAI

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www.melia-dubai.com



AL RAHA BEACH HOTEL

Set on the corniche, the hotel's outlets are Sevilla, Azur, Café Mozart, Black Pearl Bazar, Enigma, Wanasah and Al Manzil.

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www.danathotels.com



LE ROYAL MERIDIEN ABU DHABI

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www.leroyalmeridienabudhabi.com



DANAT AL AIN RESORT

The resort's restaurants include Arabesque, Luce, Tanjore, The Wok, and Shooters.

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www.danathotels.com



DANAT JEBEL DHANNA RESORT

The beach resort's outlets include Tides, Zaitoun, C View café and Latitude bar.

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SANDS HOTEL

This Abu Dhabi hotel's restaurants include LaPiazza, Harvesters Pub, Chequers, Tipar Bar and Cappuccino Royal Café.

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TILAL LIWA HOTEL

Located amidst secluded dunes off the Rub Al Khali desert, the hotel's restaurants are Al Badiya, Layali Bar; and Al Liwan.

Discount: 25% off F&B outlets
www.danathotels.com

*Terms & conditions apply.

Competitions

Fabulous prizes, from dining vouchers to event passes, up for grabs.



WIN! A CHEESE AND COLD CUT PLATTER WITH A BOTTLE OF WINE, WORTH DHS500, FROM WINE BAR, HILTON DUBAI JUMEIRAH RESIDENCES. Gather a group of friends and head to the newly opened Wine Bar at Hilton Dubai Jumeirah Residences at The Walk, to tuck into a selection of charcuterie, French cheese and a bottle of wine – ideal for a relaxed evening!

WIN! IFTAR BUFFET FOR TWO, WORTH DHS400, AT A.O.C FRENCH BRASSERIE, SOFITEL DUBAI JUMEIRAH BEACH.

Can you believe it's nearly Ramadan again? If you want to start planning for Iftar early this year, head to the A.O.C French Brasserie with a dining partner to try the themed Iftar buffet, and enjoy a variety of international cuisine as well as traditional Arabic dishes.



WIN! DINNER FOR TWO AT CHANNELS, MEDIA ROTANA HOTEL, WORTH OVER DHS400.

Take a friend along to the English Channel theme night which takes place every Sunday, and tuck into traditional favourites including a selection of pies, succulent roast carvings, salads and sweet puddings. A selection of standard beverages are also available.

DOHA competitions



WIN! FOUR ENTERTAINER QATAR BOOKS, WORTH QR350 EACH.

Four lucky winners can get their hands on the Entertainer Qatar 2013 book and enjoy unbeatable two-for-one offers at dining outlets, beauty and fitness centres, nightspots, and sports and leisure activities. The book also has an Entertainer Member Card which offers 20 per cent discount on additional members-only online offers.



WIN! SEAFOOD BUFFET FOR TWO AT MAWASEM, HILTON DOHA, WORTH QR500.

Love fish? One lucky winner and a partner can visit this seafood restaurant on a Thursday or Friday night to sample a selection of fresh seafood from a widespread buffet, while watching the skilled chefs in action at the live cooking stations.



WIN! AFTERNOON TEA EXPERIENCE AT KAMBAA ART LOUNGE, THE ADDRESS DUBAI MARINA, WORTH DHS220.

Take three girlfriends along to a classic afternoon tea at the stylish lobby lounge Kambaa, and enjoy girlie-time as you indulge in finger sandwiches, freshly baked scones with clotted cream, preserves, pastries, nibbles, cakes and a variety of teas and coffee.

To stand a chance to win these prizes, visit our competitions page on www.bbcgoodfoodme.com, or simply scan this QR code with your mobile to go directly to the website, and answer the simple questions.

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American national **SHERYN BABUKA** moved to Dubai in 2006 and lives with her husband and Emirati rescued dog, Beesly, and cat Pennie, in Jebel Ali. Sheryn works as an office manager and spends her spare time keeping fit by biking and hiking. Other than writing her own blog, All the calories, she also enjoys reading other blogs and recipe websites, but she hopes she will be able to finally commit and devote her time to knitting soon – something she's always wanted to do.

Catch me dining at...

- **Breakfast to Breakfast** at Discovery Gardens, for the halloumi manakish (with vegetables, no mint) – it's my favourite manakish in Dubai.
- **Dukan Falafel** at the Jebel Ali gas station, for lunch. The falafel Xtra with pomegranate seeds and preserved lemon is perfect.
- **Jamie's Italian** in Festival City for dinner, as I love his food and the aesthetics of the restaurant – it's laid back and I always have fun when I'm there.

MY FIVE MINUTE SALAD:

Crunchy romaine lettuce, salty Greek olives, strawberries, avocado and a drizzle of olive oil.

What cookbook are you reading right now?

Modernist Cuisine (The Cooking Lab; Spi Har/Pa edition) by Nathan Myhrvold. My husband surprised me with it for my birthday last year. It's a truly impressive work of art and I am fortunate to own it!

All-time favourite dessert
Fresh berries with whipped cream, and homemade basil sorbet.

Meet the blogger

Helping you connect to the UAE'S foodie community, one blog post at a time.

*About the blog

I started All the calories in September 2010 as I wanted it to be a reflective cookery diary, which I hoped I could look back on, to see how drastically my cooking has changed over the years. Through the blog, I connect with my family and friends in the UK and US, as they constantly comment on my recipes – we have a little foodie conversation. The blog basically showcases everything I cook on a daily basis, which can sometimes be a cookbook recipe, a recipe I made up, or came across online. I'd like the blog to be a place for foodies in Dubai to communicate, and share their passion for cooking with each other.

I always buy local cooking equipment when travelling. It's not only a great souvenir, but also tells a good story, and is a great way of scoring great quality tools on the cheap.

A foodie personality I would love to dine with...

Anthony Bourdain. I'd want to share bowls of noodles over a plastic table somewhere in Asia.

Food luxury:

Free-range, corn-fed whole chickens. They are unbelievably delicious when simply roasted, and well worth the Dhs100 price tag.

Top foodie tips

- * To make healthy popcorn, add a tablespoon of coconut oil, teaspoon of salt, and ½ a cup of popcorn kernels to a pan with a lid. Shake the pan over medium heat, until the popping slows down.
- * Put a green tea bag in a bottle of cold water. It will still steep even though the water isn't hot, and it's a great way to get extra antioxidants throughout the day. I go through at least four green tea bags a day, and that's what I attribute to the fact that I very rarely catch a cold.

My guilty pleasure

Fried chicken! I try to eat mostly vegetarian food, at all time, but after a few meatless days, I get a serious craving for fried chicken.

Favourite cuisine

Right now I'm all about Southwest Asian cuisines. My recent trip to Hong Kong and Vietnam makes me crave noodles quite a lot, and I also find myself adding a pinch of red chilli to everything.

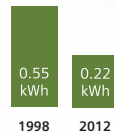


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